



HOW TO
BEAT
YOUR
Wife

DR. STEVE OGAN

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Chapter One

WHAT EXACTLY DO WOMEN WANT?

"Women are special because they are the crown of creation .
 . . Women want love, security and understanding. Few men

appreciate this. This is why many homes harbour disgruntled wives with equally disgruntled husbands."

Sigmund Freud, a foremost psychologist and psychoanalyst whose views have influenced a large body of writing and knowledge in the 20 th century once said: "After thirty years of studying [women] I ask myself, 'What is it that women want?'"

Women want love, security and understanding. Few men appreciate this. This is why many homes harbour disgruntled wives with equally disgruntled husbands.

Women have peculiar problems and it is the role of every husband to identify and overcome these problems. Men are quick to identify the problems of their wives, but slow in overcoming them. Some exaggerate these problems by giving them a larger-than-life description.

A bitter and frustrated man, thoughtlessly declared, " My wife is a demon." A friend told him the implication of what he had said. "If your wife is a demon, that means you are the husband of a demon." He didn't like the idea of being the husband of a demon. So he got a divorce.

A woman can be influenced by demons. But no woman is a demon. Besides, getting a divorce is not the best way to deal with a wife, even if you consider her to be a demon.

SPECIAL CREATURES

Women are special creatures. God gave them to men as wives. They are special because, unlike men, they are doubly refined. Adam was created as refined earth bearing the Zoe life of God. Eve was brought forth from Adam as doubly refined earth.

Women are special because they are the crown of creation. Eve was the last thing God made. Besides, she was made from the ribs of the man, an organ located close to his heart. This partly explains why the woman is tender, emotional and personal in her orientation.

Most men don't know how to treat their wives, especially when these women fail to play the roles divinely stipulated for them. In this book, you will discover how a husband can help his wife overcome the negative traits in her character. You will be educated on some peculiarities of women, and how these can be properly handled.

The Bible teaches that ". . . Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world . . ." (1 John 5:4a). A man who has the new-life experience in Jesus can help his wife overcome those negative traits in her character. Such a husband will confidently beat his wife, even if she is the worst person on earth.

What this implies is that as a natural man, you are not adequately equipped to help your wife become the best that she can be in God's hands. So why don't you take this all-important step: invite Jesus into your life. He makes all the difference. With Him in your ship, your marriage can never hit the rock. Thus equipped, you will then see clearly why and how to beat your wife, and watch her blossom in your hands like a flower in full bloom. She'll certainly bring you joy and the overall benefits of beating her in love will far outweigh any investments you can think of while here on earth.

Come on, brother, let's try a different talk. It's well worth the trouble.

Chapter Two

WHEN SHE HAS A STORY BOOK EXPECTATION OF YOU

"Story book expectations are unrealistic while others are not. However, women are generally realistic, especially where their husbands love and respect them. The best way to love a wife is to make her story come true."

Gary Smalley, a marriage counsellor and author, once asked a college girl what sort of man she would like to marry. "I'd like him to be able to tell jokes, sing and dance, and stay home at night," the girl replied. Smalley promptly told her, "You don't want a husband. What you want is a television set."

Many women carry storybook expectations of their husbands into marriage. My wife, when she was 16 years old, wanted a husband who will take her on evening walks, tell her sweet nothings and buy her beautiful flowers. Unfortunately she married a rough diamond who felt that marriage was too serious to be a matter of evening walks or flower gifts.

I believed that time should be spent for more profitable ventures, like preaching the gospel, meeting the needs of the poor and reaching out to the destitute. As for flowers, I thought they had no practical value. Why waste already limited funds, to buy what would wither at sundown? These were merely things of the flesh, which ought not to bother serious-minded people. After all, doesn't the Bible say ". . . all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Peter 1:24-25)?

Such was my orientation that I bought more books, especially Christian literature, for my wife more than any other thing. But I did not seem to meet her storybook expectations of a husband. This created unnecessary tensions during the first few years of our marriage.

It has been argued that marriages fail because of storybook expectations. This may be true, but partially so. There is nothing wrong in a college girl wanting her husband to tell her jokes, sing, dance and stay home at night. There is nothing wrong in a wife wanting moonlight walks and flowers at dinner or even a holiday in a resort. Meeting her needs in this way does not necessarily turn a man into a television set. Even so, what is wrong in a husband being a "television set", if only to make the wife happy? After all, Jesus became sin for us, that we might be saved. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

MAKING HER STORY COME TRUE

Some storybook expectations are unrealistic while others are not. However, women are generally realistic, especially where their husbands love and respect them. The best way to love a wife is to make her story come true.

Ruth Bell Graham, as a single missionary in Tibet, had a storybook expectation of her husband-to-be. "If I marry, he must be so tall that when he is on his knees, he reaches all the way to heaven. His shoulders must be broad enough to say no, and tender enough to kiss. Love must be so deep that it takes its stand in Christ and so wide that it takes the whole lost world in. He must be active enough to save souls. He must be big enough to be gentle and great enough to be thoughtful. His arms must be strong enough to carry a little child" (A Time for Remembering, Ruth Bell Graham).

Ruth's expectations of her husband were a tall order. Briefly outlined, he had to be:

- A spiritually tall and prayerful giant
- Physically strong and yet tender and romantic
- Deeply committed and in love with God
- Zealous as a soul-winner
- Thoughtful and considerate
- Gentle and meek
- A lover of children

Very few men can meet these expectations. Yet Billy Graham, the world's famous evangelist, worked hard to make Ruth's story come true. Though a naturally serious-minded person, he did not allow his seriousness to degenerate into "stuffy solemnity". He gave his wife the gentle romantic "light touch" she dreamed of in a husband. He retained "the slice of a small boy", able to love children notwithstanding the fact that he has ministered

personally to more than 100 million people, won over 2 million souls to Christ and written best-selling books. Billy Graham made Ruth's storybook expectation come true. You too can do the same for your wife.

Most men are usually narrow-minded before marriage. They have a straight-jacket idea of what they want out of life. This is often unimaginative. On the contrary, women are very imaginative. They spend long hours imagining what their husbands, their children and homes will be like. It is from such imaginative conceptions that the storybook expectations are built.

Every man needs the storybook expectations of his wife in order to know what kind of husband he should be to her. Dreams of an ideal husband developed over many years may not always be realistic. But they cannot be ignored. A man who ignores what his wife thinks he should be is looking for trouble. The so-called storybook expectations of many wives are useful in broadening the minds of their husbands.

John Pollock, Graham's biographer, says that "Ruth, more than anyone, broadened Billy's mind." This was because Graham had her storybook expectation to guide him.

Maybe you don't believe in the unfamiliar things your wife expects you to do. Things like pulling a chair for her and opening doors or petting her like a puppy. Well, that's probably because you are narrow-minded. Perhaps you have a one-track mind. "That's not African. Men ought not to do such things," you may argue. Yet there is nothing un-African about opening a door for your wife.

HOW TO MEET YOUR WIFE'S

STORYBOOK EXPECTATIONS

- Find out what her storybook expectation of you is.
- Write it out carefully and paste it where you will see it daily. The Bible says, "Write the vision . . . so he can run that readeth" (Hab. 2:2).
- Critically differentiate realistic from unrealistic expectations.
- Discuss your observations with your wife and come to a consensus of what is immediately realistic.
- Note that the so-called unrealistic expectations may in fact be realistic in future—after you have had practice in making other aspects of her story come true.
- Determine to make your wife's dream a reality.
- Set goals in specific areas.

Maybe your wife wants you to take her out for dinner. How many times in the month would you want to take her out? Maybe she wants you to appreciate her every day. Make a list of ways by which you will do this daily. Like the college girl who wanted her husband to tell jokes, sing and stay home at night, determine the number of jokes you will tell your wife daily and how often you will stay home at night each week.

David Yonggi Cho, the pastor of the world's largest church in South Korea almost lost his wife, because he did not meet her storybook expectation of him as a husband. He determined to change for good when she threatened him with separation. One of the goals he set in the process was to take his wife out every Monday, even if it meant just for window shopping. His marriage was healed and saved on the very first Monday they went out. Measure your progress by setting specific goals.

An honest and perceptive observer has noted that every woman dreams to be tenderly treated, understood and appreciated.

Realize that your wife is the author of a wonderful love story written and published in her heart. It's a story that was written long before she met you. It's a story of how handsome and faithful you are. It's a story of how strong and tender you are. It's the story of the best husband, father and friend any woman can have. It's the story of the greatest nourisher and cherisher that ever lived. It's an adventure story of romance. It's a story that needs to be acted in real life. But it's also a story that only a heroic husband can act.

You are that hero and only you can make the story come true.

Chapter Three

WHEN SHE IS TOO EMOTIONAL

"Many men are ignorant of the emotional, physical and psychological constitution of women They are like butterflies; they are easily hurt and emotionally wounded by 'tiny pebbles' such as sarcastic remarks, sharp criticisms and the indifference of their husbands."

Sekibo could not understand his wife Sele. Her eyes were rarely dry. He did not know when she was happy or when she was sad. Neither could he identify what he should or should not do to keep the tap from flowing.

Sele cried profusely on their wedding night, like someone who had lost a loved one. Tears were often in her eyes whenever Sekibo brought a gift home for her. It was usual to sob in the toilet when he forgot to buy her something she needed. Sekibo did not mind at first. "It's only a passing phase," he thought. "She'll get over it after a while."

Yet this was not to be. The situation was compounded when he got fed up and became increasingly critical of what he called childishness. "You are not a baby. You are a woman," he would chide her. Instead of helping matters, this further turned on the fountain of her tears. Sekibo even added salt to her wounds when he began to call her "cry, cry, baby".

Some women cry when their husbands are critical of them. Others cry when they are not understood or appreciated. Yet others turn on the taps when their husbands reject their food. But why are women more emotional than men? Why do they behave in a seemingly childish way? How can a husband overcome the problem of childishness in a wife?

DWELL WITH HER ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE

Apostle Peter, instructing men wrote: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

Many men are ignorant of the emotional, physical and psychological constitution of women. This lack of understanding leads them to make wrong conclusions and unwise decisions. The Bible teaches that "wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). Wisdom is applied knowledge. If you have no knowledge of how a woman is constituted, there is no way you can apply wisdom. Husbands need to know how their wives are emotionally constituted in order to "dwell with them according to knowledge."

Sekibo failed to appreciate his wife because he did not understand her mental and emotional constitution. Women are more personal than men. They have "a deeper interest in people and feelings—building relationships—while men tend to be more pre-occupied with practicalities that can be understood through logical deduction" (Joy of Committed Love, pp. 13-14).

It is not unusual for a newly married woman to cry because of the old relationships she may be leaving behind. Besides, any change of environment or possibility of establishing new relationships requires cautious consideration. A woman takes more time and effort to adjust to changes that affect her relationships.

Furthermore, to uproot a woman from her familiar environment to another place can destabilize her emotional identity. Men rarely "leave to cleave" to their wives as the Scriptures instruct. It is the woman who has to leave her maiden name, her parents, her home and sometimes her job to "cleave" to the husband in a new environment. Tears easily flow from a wife's eyes when her sacrifice is not appreciated or when she is unduly criticized or misunderstood after so great a sacrifice.

While men express their anxiety and hostility physically, women do so emotionally. They may sulk, seek attention and then cry when they are not attended to. All this may seem childish to the uninitiated. Yet it takes understanding to read a woman's moods, and to overcome what may look like an emotional tantrum.

There are many physical differences between men and women. Women get tired more easily than men. Their blood contains more water than the blood of men. They also have 20% less red blood cells than men. Given the fact that these cells carry oxygen to the cells in the body, it is not surprising that women are more easily tired than men. Criticising a tired woman can spark off emotional low-points.

Some men think their wives are out of their minds when they ask for help in doing housework. Others don't see why their wives need house helps when they have all day to be home. Women become "childish" in their utterances when they are either denied the help of their husbands to fix things at home or the right of using house helps. The truth is that an average man has 50% more natural strength than the woman. It is also instructive to note that a man's body weight is made up of 40% muscles while that of the woman is made up of 23%. Furthermore a woman's heart beats more rapidly at the average rate of 80 beats per minute, unlike the man's measured at 72 beats.

No wonder Peter instructed husbands to dwell with their wives in knowledge and to honour them as "the weaker vessels".

HOW TO DEAL WITH AN EMOTIONAL WIFE

- Understand that a woman was created to be personal and emotional.
- Appreciate the fact that the "seat" of your wife's emotions are wired differently from yours.
- Give your wife your shoulder to cry on, whether you know why she is crying or not. Your mouth is not needed.
- Don't criticize her unduly. Your tongue may turn on the tap in her eyes.
- Pet and play with her whenever you notice her approaching an emotional low-tide.
- Take extra care with her emotions whenever you are moving temporarily or permanently from one place to another. The anxiety of losing cherished relationships can create emotional upsets.
- Nourish and cherish her with words of encouragement and praise, when she is physically exhausted.
- Get her to adequately rest to refresh.

- Never fail to communicate when she most needs to talk to you. Tears may result from your not being able to read her moods or mind.
- Avoid anything that will create anxiety in her life such as battering her self-worth or not meeting her physical needs for assistance and provisions.
- Be extra-sensitive in reading and responding to her emotions when she is pregnant or bereaved. These are critical times and they demand more sensitivity.

It has been noted by Gary Smalley that a woman is like a butterfly while a man is like a buffalo. A buffalo is a rough animal with thick hard skin. It moves on the ground and therefore does not have a panoramic view of his environment. It does not notice small flowers or the movement of the breeze. It plows through the earth and does not really "feel" anything, even a pebble on its skin. This is unlike the butterfly.

A butterfly has a keen sense of sensitivity to its environment. It notices and responds to the slightest breeze. The butterfly flutters above the ground. It, therefore, has a panoramic view of its surroundings. It can see many things happening at the same time and be able to respond accordingly. The butterfly notices changes around it and reacts swiftly to anything capable of hurting it. A tiny pebble, no matter how small, could severely damage its wings. It could even lead to its death.

While men are like buffaloes, women are like butterflies. They have a panoramic view of life and are often more sensitive than men. They are easily hurt and emotionally wounded by "tiny pebbles" such as sarcastic remarks, sharp criticisms and the indifference of their husbands. They react to slight variations in a person's attitude towards them. This makes it even more imperative for husbands to act maturely to prevent emotional upsets in their wives. Don't pay undue attention to another woman. Don't come home late too often. Don't eat out without her. Don't feel unconcerned about what happens in the home.

If you take time to observe and do all these, you will have an emotionally stable wife. You will help her overcome depression and other mental illnesses that result in emotional breakdown.

Women don't like stone faces. They love men who will put a little emotional touch to their relationship. They want men who can empathize with them. A husband poetically told his wife:

You teach me empathy—

Your pain in my heart,

Emptied into the buckets of grief;

Shared by grace.

You teach me love—

Communication in commitment,

With contentment in faithfulness;

Shared in joy and pain.

This man learnt to obey God's Word: "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep." He was not ashamed to cry with his wife, without even knowing why she cried. This is the way to beat an emotional wife.

Chapter Four

WHEN SHE IS NOT SEXUALLY RESPONSIVE

"Sexual disharmony in marriage is not God's will. Sex withholding is not peculiar to women. Many husbands suffer sexual deprivation without realising that the problem could be spiritual."

More than 65% of the problems in marriage are rooted in sexual maladjustment between husbands and wives. The situation is compounded by the feeling among some Christians that sex in marriage is a necessary evil. Thus, few husbands and wives are able to communicate their needs to each other in this area. This is further compounded by the fact that little or nothing is taught about sex in churches. Pastors are not just ill-equipped to discuss this subject; they are shy, thinking they could be tagged "carnal".

What to do as a husband, when your wife is:

- Sexually indifferent
- Monotonous in bed
- Frigid
- Withholding sex from you

REPAIR THE BROKEN CISTERN

Preye, a devout Christian in Port Harcourt, felt that the best thing was to do nothing. "God must have known the woman's sexual nature before giving her to me as a wife. So why worry, when God can change her, if He decides to?" Most Christians are as naive as Preye in sexual matters. They allow the Devil to hurt them through their ignorance. Yet the Bible says "study to show yourself approved, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).

The Bible is the greatest sex manual ever written. Many Christians don't read it from this point of view of sexual relations between husbands and wives. It says,

Drink waters out of thine own Cistern, and running waters out of thine own well " Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Prov. 5:15; 17-18).

The "cistern" referred to here is the sexual organ of your wife, while the " well" is her life. It is a blessed fountain and it ought to bring you joy. Now, if a natural cistern or well is broken, it will bring forth bad water and this will not give joy to the owner of the well. It will be a shame if he continues to drink water from a broken well when it could be repaired.

Sexual disharmony in marriage is not God's will. A husband should do something about a sexually dull and inactive wife. God says: " Let her be as a loving hind and pleasant roe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love" (Proverbs 5:19).

Mutually enjoyable sex between a husband and his wife is an art that must be learnt over a period of time. It does not come easily. Neither does it come naturally. It is studied, discussed and practised. It is achieved through patience in a committed and secure marriage.

Few husbands know very well the following basics:

- The positions required for sexual enjoyment and fulfilment.
- How to obtain mutual ecstasy through delightful foreplay before sexual intercourse.
- The significance of the clitoris to a woman's sexual fulfilment.
- The times or seasons when sex could be a burden for the woman.

The Bible says, "My people perish for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

THE WEAPON OF SEX

Sex has become a weapon for fighting non-sexual battles in some families. Husbands whose wives are sexually dull become bitter. They often lash out accusations against their wives' cooking or accuse them of being lazy in doing housework. Meanwhile, the real problem is often hidden, well covered up by pretence.

Some husbands justify their desire to marry a second wife on the premise of sexual disharmony with their legitimate wives. Others get involved in extra-marital sex. But God queries such men: "

And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?" (Proverbs 5:20). He says that "marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

KNOWING THE ROOT OF YOUR

WIFE'S SEXUAL PROBLEMS

This is the key in overcoming sexual disharmony in marriage. Knowledge gives you better understanding of the problem. It helps you appreciate your wife's inability to respond to your sexual needs.

Find out what your wife's sexual indoctrination was like before marriage. Though not everyone is indoctrinated as such, most people are. A young girl was taught that "sex is the worst part of marriage". Her mind was set to detest sex long before she got married.

Another woman with a similar background narrated her first sexual experience with her husband thus: "He stripped me naked and raped me in my own bed. I fought and screamed to no avail. My virginity was gone and I cried for three days."

Some Christian women are so "holy" that they hate to be defiled by anything, including sexual intercourse with their unbelieving husbands. They believe that sex with a husband who is not born again is sin. Such women have probably read too much of the poison written by Peter Lombard and Gratien. They "warned Christians that the Holy Spirit leaves the room when a married couple engage in sexual intercourse-even if it were for the purpose of conceiving a child."

If your wife's philosophy of sex has been founded on such doctrinal rubbish, you must first de-poison her. You have to pull down the wrong ideas before you can build up the right ones.

Some women are not sexually responsive because of demonic problems. Jane loved her husband but could not understand why she hated his touch at night. She resisted sexual intercourse with Philip, often pushing him away on the few occasions he succeeded in lying with her.

Philip was frustrated and bitter. The irony was that Jane always enjoyed sexual relationship with a man in her dreams. She constantly had orgasmic experiences reverberating in her even after having sex in her dreams. She could not talk to Philip about her experience for fear of being misunderstood.

She sought counselling and deliverance with us, during which we discovered that she had the problem of a spirit husband. Such spiritual marriages are common amongst people living near lakes, rivers or oceans. They often result from sexual perversions. Men

or women who have been involved in fornication, adultery, polygamy, abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography or oral sex are most likely to have opened the doors to spiritual marriages with evil spirits.

The Devil uses such marriages to obstruct true sexual fulfilment between married couples. This creates tension between husbands and wives which often leads to divorce. Jane was asked to confess her sexual sins before marriage. She also renounced and rejected any other spiritual marriage, except to Philip. Not long after, she reported the cessation of sexual intercourse in her dreams. She also reported a remarkably improved sexual relationship with her husband.

Many husbands suffer sexual deprivation without realizing that the problem could be spiritual. Encourage your wife to go for counselling and deliverance if she habitually has sex in her dreams. This problem and the solution to it is more fully developed in the chapter on dealing with spirit spouses.

Sexual problems in women may also be physical, psychological or emotional. Whichever it is, identifying the root of the problem will help you to help your wife. Discuss your sexual problems openly and together seek a lasting solution.

SPECIFIC SEXUAL PROBLEMS IN WOMEN

- Thick and unbroken hymen which makes penetration difficult.
- Psychological and emotional damage resulting from pain during penetration.
- Inability to experience the "good-all-over-feeling" called orgasm. This may result from insufficient genital stimulation during foreplay or inexperience in stroking the clitoris.
- Sore feeling in the woman after child birth.
- Postpartum depression which leads to low sexual drives in women.
- Sex withholding resulting from a negative concept of sex in marriage.
- Misconception in Christian women that sexual intercourse with an unbelieving husband is carnal and contrary to God's will.
- Low or non-existent sexual drive during illness, the latter stages of pregnancy or during certain days of the menstrual cycle.
- Fluctuating sexual moods resulting from sharp criticism, emotional problems or instability in the home environment.

- Prolonged barrenness, capable of creating disillusionment as to the efficacy of sexual intercourse.
- Fear of pregnancy after the desired number of children has been born.
- Demonic problems arising from spiritual marriages to spirit husbands.

OVERCOMING THE SEXUAL PROBLEMS

IN YOUR WIFE

A thick and unbroken hymen which creates pain during penetration can be broken medically by a doctor. Psychological and emotional damage resulting from pain during penetration can be healed by prayer. The problem could also be solved practically through the use of a petroleum or surgical jelly to lubricate the sex organs before intercourse.

Sexual problems experienced by women sometimes are a product of inexperience on the part of husbands. A wife may not have experienced an orgasm because of undue tension before intercourse. Tension, on the other hand, may be caused by a number of things: lack of adequate communication by husbands, undue criticism of the wives and general instability at home.

You will need to create the right atmosphere to get your wife relaxed before intercourse. Unlike men, women need a whole day or more to be prepared for intercourse. Men respond sexually to the sight of a naked woman, but women respond to touch and speech. Joyce Huggett, in *Creative Conflict*, notes that "everything else colours sex. Thus a couple who have been working too hard, depriving one another of companionship, communication, tenderness or sensitivity are unlikely to enjoy mutually satisfying sex" (p. 171). Call your wife special names. Treat her like a queen. "A woman is like an iron and a man is like a light bulb. She warms up to the sexual expression, while he turns on immediately" (*The Joy of Committed Love*, pp. 88).

Husbands must also take good care of their personal hygiene. Some wives are not sexually responsive because their husbands have appalling hygienic standards. Use mild deodorant to overcome any problem of body odour. Also give due consideration to your wife during the latter stages of pregnancy and after birth. Avoid any attempt to cajole her into sex if she feels sore. Love is kind and considerate. Indeed, many women, as we noted, have very low sex drives immediately after childbirth. Besides, you are expected to let her wounds heal before resuming sexual intercourse.

Finally, adopt family planning techniques that suit you both, if her problem is the fear of pregnancy. Many women who have finished bearing the desired number of children withhold sex from

their husbands for fear of pregnancy. Sex withholding, however, goes beyond the fear of pregnancy. There are religious, traditional and psychological reasons for this problem which demand a more creative way of dealing with it.

HOW TO OVERCOME SEX

WITHHOLDING BY YOUR WIFE

Sex withholding is not peculiar to women. Jacob withheld sex from Leah after they had a couple of children. He had an alternative sex partner in Rachel, Leah's sister, to whom he was also married.

Leah dealt with the problem by conceding to give Rachel her son's mandrakes in exchange for permission to have sex with Jacob. The transaction between the three persons is indicative of the carnal methods people adopt to solve the problem of sex withholding.

. . . Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? And wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went to meet him, and said, thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night (Genesis 30:14-16).

Leah hired Jacob for one night with mandrakes, a type of fruit, to overcome her problem of sexual deprivation. Many husbands in a similar predicament are forced to make material promises before their wives yield. Sex is used as a weapon of extortion. But this is clearly the spirit of prostitution. Only a prostitute requires to be "hired" before one can have sex with her. To deal with sex withholding in this way amounts to inviting the spirit of prostitution into your home. Communication and prayer are the most effective means of dealing with sexual starvation in marriage.

Is your wife depriving you of sex? Sit down with her and talk it over. You don't have to rape your wife or plan to go to "greener grass". Neither do you have to hire her with material things or money. Show her what the Word of God says:

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (1 Cor. 7: 3-5).

A CREATIVE APPROACH

A man adopted a very creative approach in dealing with the problem. He communicated his need to his wife in an unusual letter. He addressed this novel letter to his "Ever-Loving Wife". Without much protocol he went straight to the problem which needed to be resolved:

"During the past year, I have attempted to seduce you 365 times. I succeeded 36 times. This averages once every ten days. The following is a list of excuses made on the unsuccessful occasions:

We will wake the children	7	times
It's too hot	15	"
It's too cold	3	"
Too tired	19	"
It's too early	9	"
It's too late	16	"
Pretending to sleep	33	"
Windows open-neighbours will hear	3	"
Your back ached	16	"
Toothache	2	"
Headache	26	"
Giggling fit	2	"
I've had too much	4	"
Not in the mood	21	"
The baby is crying	18	"
Watched late-night show	7	"
Mudpack on	15	"
Grease on face	12	"
Reading Sunday paper	6	"
We have company in the next room	7	"
Your parents were staying with us	5	"
My parents were staying with us	5	"
Is that all you ever think about?	105	"

Do you think you could improve our record this coming year?" the man asked. Concluding this humorous letter, he signed off.

Your ever-loving husband.

(Quoted by Jack Dominian, Marital Breakdown , Pelican 1968, pp. 79-80).

We are not sure how this man's wife responded to his letter. But she surely must have had a good laugh. Joyce Huggett recommends that couples should "learn to laugh about their sexual mishaps, not to be crushed or humiliated by them ." Laughter should never be used to ridicule each other. It should rather be used to reduce stress and "pave the way for progress".

You and your wife can enjoy a more fulfilling sex life. Buy and read good Christian books on sexual enjoyment. Intended for Pleasure , by Ed and Gaye Wheat (Scripture Union, 1977,) is a good book. There are so many others. Be patient with your wife. Pray for her and for yourself in areas you may also have problems. Be practical! Experiment different intercourse positions in the privacy of your room. Sex is not the worst part of marriage. It is probably the best. It is God's wedding present to couples. And it takes some effort to unwrap a wedding present.

Chapter Five

WHEN SHE DOES NOT FEEL LOVED

"It is possible for a man to love his wife without her feeling and appreciating his love. Most women conceive love as communication with contentment, in faithfulness, shared in joy and pain."

A marriage is in grave danger when a woman does not feel loved. The onus is always on the husband to fill the gap in the wife's love life. God says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

It is possible for a man to love his wife without her feeling and appreciating his love. This is because many husbands do not meet their wives' needs from the women's point of view. Gary Smalley once decided to surprise his wife by repainting their house. She thanked him for loving her enough to surprise her. But she actually wanted a new kitchen floor, not a repainted house.

Smalley says, "A man's brilliant idea can backfire." Wives feel left out when their husbands prioritize for them. Doing things for others our way is a selfish, immature form of love. This selfishness partly accounts for why many women do not feel loved by their husbands.

WHAT IS LOVE?

A man threatened with divorce could not understand where he went wrong. "How can she do this to me after all I've done for her," he said. "I've given her a house of her own, I meet the needs of the children and work so hard to make everyone happy."

True, this husband did all these. Yet he was always critical of his wife, never spent time with her and therefore could not identify her real needs.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 we read:

Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong (Living Bible).

Women like material things. But they are more interested in the quality of relationships. They are not as attached to things as they are to persons. It is from this point of view they define love. Most wives will rather be deprived of material wealth than the love of a husband. Indeed, Proverbs 15:17 says, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Again Proverbs 17:1 says, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifice with strife."

Most women conceive love as communication in commitment with contentment, in faithfulness, shared in joy and pain. A wife does not feel loved when her husband fails to communicate, when he is not as committed to her as to his job or when he is not contented with her and therefore becomes unfaithful.

MAKE HER FEEL MORE VALUABLE

THAN ANY OTHER PERSON

A woman is not only disappointed but also devastated when she knows she is not the most important person in her husband's life. A wife lamented that "even our dog is more important to him than I am. At least he comes home and plays with the dog. But all I get is 'when's dinner going to be ready?'"

Some husbands have made their wives widows, though they are still alive. Some love their television sets and newspapers more than they love their wives. Some prefer the football game to their marriage. Yet others have made pools betting or casino gambling their help-meet. Thus many wives are either T.V. widows or football widows.

People naturally put their hearts where their treasures are. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21). If your wife is your treasure, your heart will be with her. The Bible says of the virtuous woman, "The heart of her

husband doth safely trust in her, so he shall have no need of spoil" (Proverbs 31:11). A wife has a high sense of security and self-worth if and when her husband enthusiastically spends more time with her than with his club, community or job.

To reassure your wife and make her feel loved, do these:

- Spend more time with her than with friends or relatives or even the children. Some men come back from work, cuddle and kiss the children without even greeting their wives. That's a bad message to her, even if she equally loves the children. Make your wife know that you would rather choose to be with her than with any other person.
- Avoid postponing programmes planned and scheduled with her in order to meet the needs of others. Some husbands will abandon a dinner date with their wives to meet an emergency. Your wife will become bitter without saying so when this happens often. If this is your lot presently, regard your scheduled dates with your wife as a more urgent emergency. You will honour her by so doing according to I Peter 3:7, and she'll love you for it.
- Don't just make promises to change. Let her see genuine effort in this direction. Cancel a few important programmes and tell her, "I did it just to be with you."
- Listen to her complaints of your bad behaviour without arguing or justifying yourself.
- Humble yourself. Ask your wife for forgiveness if you have dishonoured her.
- Don't give up even if she refuses to forgive you or see your determination to change the way you treat her. It sometimes takes a long time for women to notice any positive change in their husbands. This should not discourage you. Keep at it.

A husband bought a box of candy and a dozen roses for his wife after hearing a powerful message on love and marriage. He wanted to right the wrongs done through the years of accumulated offences. The wife thought something was wrong. "Oh, this is terrible," she said, weeping. "The baby cut his finger, I burned your dinner when I couldn't get rid of the vacuum cleaner salesman, the sink is stopped up . . . and now you come home drunk" (The Joy of Committed Love, pp. 29-30).

Don't worry if your wife does not initially understand or appreciate your effort to love her more. Don't worry if she thinks you are drunk. Just tell her, "I am drunk with new love for you".

OTHER WAYS TO MEET HER NEED

TO FEEL LOVED

- Praise Her Daily. Tell her how proud you are of her. Remember what the husband of the virtuous woman told his wife: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all" (Proverbs 31:28). God says ". . . let her own works praise her in the gate" (Prov. 31:29).
- Comfort her when she is under stress or hurting. Avoid giving her a lecture. Your wife needs your shoulder, not your mouth.
- Make her know you will protect her physically, spiritually and emotionally. Defend her in the presence of others.
- Keep an open line of communication with her. Don't keep any "no-go-areas".
- Seek and take her advice seriously.
- Help her in the kitchen. Fix things in the home.
- Do away with the habits and mannerisms that annoy her in your life.
- Treat her as an equal, even though you are the head of the family.
- Be courteous to her. Pull chairs for her, open doors.
- Remember her birthday and wedding anniversary. Make them special. Buy her gifts during these occasions.
- Always tell her you love her.
- Never criticize her in front of other people.
- Empathize with her when she is ill, stay around her. Be willing to run errands.
- Cuddle and kiss her. Hold her tenderly without necessarily thinking about sex.

A woman was suffering from depression, so her concerned husband took her to a psychiatrist. The doctor listened to the couple talk about their relationships, and then said, "The treatment I prescribe is really quite simple." With that he went over to the man's wife, gathered her up in his arms, and gave her a big kiss. He then stepped back and looked at the woman's glowing face and broad smile. Turning to the woman's husband, he said, "See! That's all she needs to put new life back into her" . Expressionless, the husband said, "OK, Doc, I can bring her in on Tuesdays and Thursdays" (Illustrations Unlimited , pp.334).

Only a husband operating by the grace of God can make a wife feel loved. No other person, doctor, psychiatrist or nurse can do it for him. You must be determined to change your wife's conception

of your relationship by treating her tenderly. Hugh Bishop says, "Love is not an emotion. It is a policy." Don't say, "I don't feel like doing it." Just make a policy to try. Lean on the Holy Spirit for help and you will never be disappointed.

A certain man never opened the car door for his wife or any other woman. He felt it was a sissy Emily-Post kind of thing to do, and besides, he was fond of saying, "She doesn't have two broken arms." His table manners left much to be desired, and manners in general were looked upon by him as quite unnecessary.

After many years of marriage, his wife died and he was heartbroken because he truly loved her. Somehow, as the pallbearers brought her casket out of the funeral service, the late woman's husband and his family reached the hearse ahead of them. The mortician was back a few feet and, since he knew the husband quite well, he called him by name and said, "Open the door for her, will you?" The man reached for the door handle and then, for one second, just froze. He realized he had never opened a car door for her in life. Now in her death it would be the first, last, and only time. It was a moment for him when years of regrets came crashing down around him (Illustrations Unlimited , pp. 338).

Now is the time to love your wife and to make her feel loved. Eventually either she or you will die and go to be with the Lord. There is no marriage in Heaven. There is no love in the grave. Love your wife and make her feel loved while there is yet time. Even after death parts you, let her memory of you be a lovely one.

Chapter Six

WHEN THE FOUNDATION IS FAULTY

"More marriages have been destroyed by carrying out the demands of dark forces which clearly originate from evil foundations, than by mere character flaw in a spouse."

I have heard people try to explain some of the reasons why marriages fail. But each time they dwell mainly on human weaknesses and difficulties in the economy. Marriages do not only fail because of difficulties in inter-personal relationships or the economic realities. The fact that a woman is hyper-emotional, seemingly childish or perverted in character may actually have deeper underlying reasons. But I dare say, behind these visible problems may lie invisible forces which aim to steal the joy and happiness of couples.

The counsel advocated in previous chapters may not work even when diligently applied, if a marriage is built upon an evil or faulty foundation. It may only work temporarily, creating an illusion of happiness with cosmetic solutions but not a lasting impact.

The word "foundation" , as used in this chapter, refers to the things human beings have done in the past, or things done by their ancestors related to:

- Idolatrous Worship
- Ungodly Pledging of Allegiance
- Contacts Guarding their Marriages
- What they have Committed Their Children to for Future Preservation.

Such foundations, if wrong, need to be destroyed and proper ones laid. Otherwise difficulties will follow such a family for 3 or 4 generations.

More marriages have been destroyed by carrying out the demands of dark forces, which clearly originate from evil foundations, than by mere character flaws in a spouse. Evil foundations reinforce the damaging effects of character flaws which often lead to divorce. This is why, in order to beat your wife, you must identify and uproot the evil foundations upon which her roots are located because the tentacles of those roots affect your marriage. Addressing issues such as ancestral covenants, curses, litigations and tokens that have to do with faulty foundations are not exclusive to your wife. You may find them in your own lineage or family background if you have eyes spiritually trained to look into the activities of previous generations.

So don't just go pointing accusing fingers at your wife, blaming all your woes on her family foundations. You must also examine the evils rooted in the foundations of your own family and the corporate foundations established by you and your wife at the inception of your relationship.

David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, asked a rhetorical question: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). Nothing can be done except to thoroughly examine, cleanse and rebuild the broken foundation in righteousness.

Foundations are invisible, but they determine the dynamics of visible structures built upon them, including human relationships. They may have been laid long before the marriage was contracted, but they determine the stability and durability of the marriage. A couple may know little or nothing about them, but their marriage and even the marriages of their children and children's children could be affected by these evil foundations. Let us now look closely at some foundations.

FOUNDATION OF INCEST

There is a small town in West Africa which, until recently, had innumerable social problems which defied all human solutions. The

town is very underdeveloped, its people are poverty-stricken and without electricity. Its problems were legion. There was no living church in the town. Pastors who tried to set up such churches either committed immorality and were driven out in shame with the consequence of their churches closing down or scattering because of the ill-feeling generated by the misdemeanour.

The problem of sexual immorality was even more prevalent with the indigenes. It was common for fifteen year-old girls to be pregnant. Even twelve or thirteen-year-old boys were known to be fathers. Polygamy was rife and very few monogamists could sustain marital relationships. Divorce was very rampant and there were other prevalent problems such as starvation, early deaths, general backwardness, lack of productivity, alcoholism and violence. In fact, investigations revealed that more than half the citizens of the town were often drunk by 9 o'clock every morning.

It was the failure to sustain any living church and the need to address this town's problems that provoked some intercessors to watch over the city in prayer, complete with fasting, supplication and intercession which subsequently revealed the invisible hands behind the innumerable problems of this little town. When these concerned intercessors began to study the town from a spiritual perspective (spiritual mapping), it was discovered that the founder of the town was the product of an incestuous relationship between a father and a daughter. In other words, a father had sexual intercourse with a daughter and produced a son who migrated and founded this town. That reminds us of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters which produced the Moabites and the Ammonites in the Bible (Genesis 19:30-38). No wonder the citizens of the town lived in so much darkness that it was virtually impossible to sustain properly constituted families.

A family established on the foundations of an incestuous relationship is bound to suffer undue stress which may eventually lead to barrenness or divorce (Leviticus 20:20-21). If either you or your wife has been involved at any time in sexual intercourse with a close relation, this will surely bring curses in your marriage, if you have not repented of, confessed and forsaken the sin. Deuteronomy 27:20, 22-23 specifies curses which come upon persons who enter into incestuous relationships in the family whether with their step-fathers or step-mothers, half-sisters and or half-brothers, sons-in-law or daughters-in-law or fathers and daughters and mothers and their own sons:

Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed Cursed is the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his mother cursed is the one who lies with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

A similar Scripture is found in Leviticus 18:6-17. Verse 6 speaks clearly against uncovering the nakedness of any of your kinsman/woman in general:

None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to lie, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.

Verse 7 speaks concerning uncovering the nakedness of either a father or mother by the children:

The nakedness of thy father or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

Verse 8 addresses step-sons and step-mothers directly:

The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.

Verse 9 addresses a sister who may be your father's or mother's daughter through a step-marriage:

The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.

Verse 10 addresses grandchildren and grand-parents:

The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of the thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness.

Verses 11-17 addresses in-law and extended family relationships:

Immorality from the incestuous point of view is not the only thing that constitutes an evil foundation. There are two inter-related things that also add up to produce an evil foundation.

CONSTITUENTS OF AN EVIL FOUNDATION

Idolatry: The belief in and worship of man-made gods or deities other than the God of the Bible (Deut. 27:15).

Wickedness: The practice and perpetuation of injustice in human relationships causing suffering, misery and death (Deut. 27:16-19). This includes bloodshed which defiles the land with the blood of the innocent crying out to God for vengeance.

Some people go to idol altars to seek for marriage partners, like the prostitute whose story is recounted in the chapter on foundations in How to Beat Your Husband . Sacrifices are made with satanic tokens used to manipulate and match two otherwise incompatible persons. When this happens, the partners usually end up as strange bed-fellows in marriage.

Some men got married by using charmed objects such as "girls-follow-me" talisman and amulets. Others entered into legitimate relationships based on genuine love for their wives. But their marriages were dedicated to deities without their knowledge under highly occultic traditional ceremonies where sacrifices were made to demons in the name of honouring and invoking the consent and blessings of dead ancestors. Unknown to green-horn couples who are only too eager to get over and done with the traditional marriage ceremonies, the parties were compelled to enter into blood covenants as libations were poured. Sooner or later these covenants begin to speak in those marriages.

There have been cases where a man and his wife-to-be were joined in marriage at the grave side of the woman's late father. They were made to prostrate on the grave, pour libation and offer kolanuts to the dead with the living relations as witnesses. This is nothing less than the veneration of ancestral spirits. And it is idolatry short and simple.

Some Christians have ignorantly agreed to these highly diabolical traditional marriage practices, thereby laying a faulty foundation for their marriages. Satan will turn round to destabilise your marriage if you or your wife did any of the following during your engagement or wedding ceremony:

- Visit a native doctor or a satanic priest for assistance in marriage or business.
- Consult a palmist or an occultist to determine the suitability of each other for marriage.
- Pour libation or eat and drink from the cup of the dead. This amounts to ancestor worship.
- Taste and drink wine or liquids mingled with the blood of the couple to seal allegiance to one another or to the bridegroom's family. The deceitful explanation usually given is that this drastic action serves to preserve fidelity.
- Any form of sacrifice using chickens, rams, goats or any other animals or tokens.
- Pre-marital sex, pregnancy before marriage to prove the fertility of the man or woman.
- Pre-marital sex leading to abortion.
- Conceal illegitimate children from a spouse.
- Conceal the fact that one has been previously married and divorced.
- Conceal any previous or current membership or affiliation to occultic groups or secret societies.

- Conceal previous cases of imprisonment.
- Conceal hereditary sicknesses such as insanity in your family.
- Any other lie or false claim made to manipulate a potential spouse into accepting one's hand in marriage.
- Plain disobedience in marrying an unbeliever or adherent of another religion contrary to the injunctions of 2 Corinthians 6:14-15.

There was the case of a lady Magistrate who for several years seemed like a fervent believer in Christ Jesus. She worshipped in one of the leading Pentecostal churches in the city of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Yet she secretly married a Muslim on the pretext that God told her to do so. But God does not contradict His Word. There is no relationship between light and darkness, between a believer and non-believer. Any marriage built upon a faulty foundation will suffer undue stress and may eventually collapse, if the foundation is not rectified.

DESTROYING AN EVIL FOUNDATION

Realise that marriage can never work on the foundation of idolatry, wickedness and immorality. Neither can it work on the foundation of any other falsehood or lie. On the contrary, it will collapse like a house of cards, faster than one can ever imagine. Consequently, you must consciously do the following:

- Re-evaluate the generational foundation upon which your family is built. This will demand strenuous efforts in investigating into:
 - o Any traces of idolatry
 - o Perceived cases of wickedness either through land or property grabbing, bloodshed, slavery, false accusation, oppression of widows, orphans, strangers, poor or disabled people who cannot defend themselves.
 - o Discovery of any cases of immorality including fornication, adultery or incest
- Do a thorough work on your genealogy. Begin spiritual mapping. Examine the roots of your primary family and that of your spouse, including the extended family or the kindred.
- Ask God questions, ask Him to reveal those things which men may not say. I say this because most families have carefully covered up their shameful past or roots for fear of being laughed at or scorned. This is clearly dangerous and foolhardy. If you are in this situation, then you are playing with fire. And you know it will burn sooner or later.

- Bring quality repentance over every generational sin you notice. Do it line upon line, precept upon precept. Be diligent and thorough. Don't gloss over anything. Do it together with your spouse if he/she is born again.
- Bring repentance for the things you or your spouse did to reinforce these generational sins. Mention them point by point. Realise how badly grieved God is by your action and genuinely show godly sorrow.
- Make restitution to your spouse for any lie or falsehood you perpetrated before or after the marriage.
- Have you dedicated yourselves through ungodly religious ceremonies or secret societies? Renounce and revoke all the covenants (agreements) and dedications entered into knowingly or unknowingly before and after your marriage.
- Destroy the evil altars upon which such covenants and dedications were made. This requires burning the tokens which are the symbols of the agreements, as was done in Acts 19:18-20. Altars are places where you contact evil spirits and from where you receive information from them.
- Renounce the use of witchcraft which operates by the spirit of manipulation, domination and control in your marriage.
- Break the curses that seek to destroy your marriage.
- Serve a quit notice to the spirits to which your marriage was covenanted.
- Renounce the tokens, litigations and sanctions that had to do with the old covenant or altars. Tokens are physical things you keep, such as rings, luck charms, etc. as symbols of the covenant you have made with demons. Litigations and sanctions speak of the punishment which demons mete upon you if you disobey the covenant. In most cases these are a form of illness, barrenness or various forms of curses.
- Build a new altar in righteousness and consecrate your marriage as well as future generations of your offspring on this altar. This altar should become a place of consistent prayer where you re-dedicate your family to God.
- Enter into a fresh marriage covenant sealed with the blood of Jesus. This can be done in a living church through the help of a pastor who has a good and verified testimony in his marriage. Such a marriage blessing will open the heavens for your family. It will mark a new and blessed beginning for you.
- Rededicate the children and everything pertaining to your marriage back to God. That action serves as a seal to mark them out anywhere as God's own vessels.

- Make a vow never to rebuild the evil foundations you have destroyed.

Note: Renouncing is a form of prayer by which we give up or surrender certain beliefs and practices.

Everything stated above must be done with the Word of God and by the leading of the Holy Spirit. But it must begin with genuine repentance. There are three levels of repentance which are all indispensable in destroying evil foundations. These are:

1. Personal Repentance: This involves the acknowledgement, confession and forsaking of sins committed by an individual.
2. Corporate Repentance: At this level, the confession of sins must be done by a group, whether the sin is committed by an individual or by the group. No one should feel it does not concern him/her directly.
3. Identificational Repentance: This refers to the confession of sins committed by others both in the past and present-sins which affect those who did not directly commit them. This is a clear mandate for all intercessors as Nehemiah 1:1-4 shows.

Leviticus 26:40-42 states:

If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity; Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land

A similar sentiment is expressed in the book of 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If the people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin, and heal their land."

THE VALUE OF QUALITY REPENTANCE

Many people are waiting for God to answer their prayers when God is waiting for them to bring the level and quality of repentance that will release the mercy of God as illustrated by this story.

Ajua was at the point of packing out of her home. She had decided to leave because her husband had taken up with another woman who bore him two children. To compound the problem he often came back home late, and sometimes did not return at all. She was always fighting with him, quarrelling and generally making herself and her three children miserable. Now fed up with the marriage, she

was ready to pack it all up. In fact, she'd made arrangements to secure a house in another city.

She sought help from a man of God in Accra (Ghana) who asked a few questions that compelled her to re-examine the foundation of her marriage. Ajua was born again, Spirit-filled and relatively knowledgeable in the Scriptures when she married Kofi, an unbeliever. In fact, she had married him against the advice of her close Christian friends who knew that Kofi was not born again. This she did in clear violation of the injunction of 2 Corinthians 6:14-15. When the troubles in their marriage seemed to defy solution, Ajua became more concerned about Kofi's cruelty to her than her disobedience to God's Word.

It was only after the man of God told her to forget what Kofi had done to her and focus instead on what she had done to hurt God's feelings that Ajua realised the gravity of her offence. She wept like a baby, bringing repentance before God for marrying a non-believer. She could now feel God's grief for her covetousness and self-will. Two days after this Kofi came back home, apologised to her and promised to stop seeing the other woman. He even remembered Ajua's birthday and bought her a huge present: something he had not done for many years. Their marriage was healed, because Ajua dared to re-examine the foundation of her relationship to Kofi. The Bible says, "Except ye repent ye will likewise perish."

Chapter Seven

WHEN SHE WANTS A DIVORCE

"It is so easy to get a divorce today that some couples could be married and divorced in the twinkling of an eye. What God hates must be bad. Many people fail to understand that God intended marriage to last until death."

It is often assumed, perhaps erroneously, that men have a greater propensity to seek for divorce than women. It is not clear if this assumption can be definitely proven, especially in Africa where statistics on vital social issues are hard to get. Nevertheless, there are no doubts that women as well as men in Europe, America or in Africa are tempted to seek for divorce whenever they perceive that they can no longer experience joy and fulfilment in their marriage.

What would you do if your wife wants a divorce? How do you respond to a wife who says she no longer wants you to be her husband?

The mention of divorce is just as traumatic to men as it is to women. There is a feeling of failure in many husbands whenever their wives consider the option of divorcing them. It's as if one has failed in the onerous task of being a good husband. Such a feeling is not always a true reflection of a man's ability. But

it often creates an additional feeling of not being a real man. It leads some men to react violently, sometimes without adequate consideration of the harmful and compounding effects of their actions. It has been noted that apart from the death of a spouse, divorce is the next highest cause of marital stress and depression. It accounts for more than 70% of the crises that cause stress and depression in individuals.

It is so easy to get a divorce today that some couples could be married and divorced in the twinkling of an eye. Divorce is no longer seen as a shameful thing. It is now more or less an acceptable societal norm. One man simply walked his wife to court when she asked for a divorce. They got the divorce and he walked her back home and even helped her pack her things. This may seem like a mature and refined way to get a divorce without all the bickering.

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A WOMAN,

HER DAUGHTER AND HER GRANDMOTHER

One of the tabloids in Ghana reported the case of a man, Harold Gult, 40, who got married to three generations of ladies from the same family. He first married Anna Nowland, then her daughter Michelle and then Michelle's grandmother, Maria Nowland.

He married Anna in 1994. By his own testimony quoted in the paper, "Anna is a beautiful woman and we had some great times, but before long we realised we weren't cut out to spend our lives together." They were therefore divorced. But less than four months after their divorce, Harold began to see Anna's daughter by another man with the mother's approval. Michelle was only 18 years old when she married her step-father.

She spent a year out of college due to her marriage to Harold, but decided to go back to school at Iowa (USA). Harold says that they "had a little chat and decided there was no reason to go on being married when she was going to live in Iowa and I was going to live in Minnesota." He also claims to have been "crushed because I really thought I'd spend my life with Michelle."

This so-called pain probably led him to find solace in the arms of Maria, Michelle's grandmother. Of course she wouldn't have need to go far away to attend school like her granddaughter. He married her at a ceremony attended by Anna and Michelle, his ex-wives. Harold explains why "Maria is the kindest, sweetest woman I have ever known . . . Without her help I don't know how I would have survived the divorce from Michelle . . . Before I knew it, one thing led to another and Maria and I were talking marriage."

Harold sums up what has been described as his marriage-go-round in a rather bizarre way. He said: "I've been blessed three times with these wonderful Nowland women." One only wonders why he had

to divorce a mother and her daughter to marry a grandmother if they were such wonderful women.

The truth is that marriage has been cheapened by the ease with which anybody can get a divorce for the flimsiest reason. For Harold Gult to have been able to marry three relations within six years shows that something grave is wrong with mankind. It's shameful, not just because it is revolting for one man to have sex with a mother, grandmother and grandchild, but because it runs against the grain of Bible teaching which forbids any man from uncovering the nakedness of a mother and daughter. Quite apart from the demands of decency, this kind of easy arrangement just goes to show how deluded our so-called enlightened society has become.

At least the Christian mind is repelled by this shameful kind of behaviour. It is against this background that God has laid down these views on marriage and divorce in the Bible.

BIBLICAL VIEW ON DIVORCE

This may come as a shock to many people, but God never intended couples to marry and divorce for flimsy reasons as we find today. In fact, couples must realise that God actually frowns at divorce. Therefore, the first thing we must note is that God hates divorce. Malachi 2:15 says;

For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence, says that the Lord of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.

What God hates must be bad. Many people fail to understand that God intended marriage to last until death. When the Pharisees and the Sadducees who represented the religious establishment in Jesus' day queried Jesus on why Moses permitted husbands to give their wives a bill of divorcement, He argued that Moses did so because of the "hardness of men's hearts". Jesus concluded by saying that from the beginning divorce was not permitted. "Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Divorce was permitted in the Bible strictly on grounds of adultery and impurity flowing from idol worship. In Matthew 5:32 Jesus stated this categorically: ". . . Whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

Many wives have divorced their husbands, and vice versa, on grounds other than adultery. Very flimsy excuses such as looks, character flaws, and inability to perform in bed have been offered to explain reasons for divorces. Here I have a word for

the men: the mere fact that your wife claims she is no longer in love with you is not enough grounds for divorce.

The other ground on which God permitted divorce in Israel was because certain Jewish men, including priests married women from foreign nations. These women engaged in idol worship and caused their husbands to forsake the worship of the true God. This problem affected even the kings of Israel such as Solomon and Ahab, to mention a few prominent examples. The book of Ezra records this concerning some Jews who became convicted for entering into these marriages:

And among the sons of the Priests who had taken pagan wives, the following were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the brothers; Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib and Gedaliah. And they gave their promises that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they presented a ram of the flock as their trespass offering (Ezra 10:18-19).

The Apostle Paul also taught that where a man gives his life to Christ and the wife objects to his being saved and wants to leave him, he is not bound to tag along with her.

But to this rest I, not the Lord, say: if any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband, who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace (1 Cor.7:12-15).

Many people have used Paul's personal view expressed above as licence to justify divorce and remarriage. First, they suggest that when the unbeliever decides to leave his believing spouse, the believer is not under bondage to remain unmarried. She could remarry. But Paul meant no such thing, because he was fully aware of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:32 ". . . that whosoever divorces his wife for any reason except for sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced (even because of immorality) commits adultery."

Further, Paul expressly stated in the scripture cited above that what he was suggesting was his own personal opinion and not the Lord's. In contrast, he began laying down the principles of divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 by stating:

Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

It was from this point that he entered into his argument in verses 12 and 15 which began with: "But to the rest I, not the Lord, say . . . if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace."

We must not confuse what Paul said with what the Lord said, especially when Paul himself clearly stated the difference. God says a husband should not divorce his wife, but if he does he must remain unmarried. A wife is not to divorce her husband, but if she does, she too must remain unmarried. This is the standpoint of Scripture even where divorce is instituted by a particular party because of immorality or because of the salvation of a spouse. He who marries a person divorced for whatever reason commits adultery. I know that sounds hard and very outdated, but that is Scripture, which unfortunately cannot be changed or interpreted to suit our circumstances.

While God understands the pain many people are passing through in marriage—the physical and mental abuse, the desertion and the lack of security, He also makes it abundantly clear that He hates divorce. It is this divine hatred for divorce that explains the difficulty God places on the path of those who want a divorce. His aim is not to make you suffer forever in your affliction, but to show you a much better way of escape than divorce. I believe the Lord is happier to see even estranged couples reconcile and re-unite than when they go their separate ways.

PRACTICAL STEPS TO TAKE WHEN YOUR WIFE WANTS A DIVORCE

- Don't panic or throw your hands in the air as if nothing can be done. Something can be done and there's always a silver lining on the dark clouds threatening to mar your happiness.
- Quietly find out why she wants a divorce.
- Avoid any verbal or physical contention when trying to find out why she wants a divorce.
- Do an honest self-examination. Identify aspects of your character or attitude that may have motivated her action. The Bible says "judge yourself and you will not need to be judged."
- Determine to change your character or attitude. Work hard at it. I must confess, this is very unpleasant but at the end of the day you'll reap a rich reward.
- Re-examine your foundations according to the standard set out in the counsel in chapter five. Bring repentance wherever you notice idolatry, immorality or any form of wickedness.
- Fight for your marriage. This can best be done on your knees through intense prayers of intercession, supplication and strategic level of spiritual warfare. At this level you are

dealing with the ruling spirits which control the actions of people.

- Suggest to her the need for counselling. Promise to do whatever it will take to make her reconsider her decision.
- Get your pastor or other trusted and respected Christian leaders to try and convince your wife to change her mind.
- Where she wants a divorce because of your infertility, cry out to God to intervene in the way Hannah did (1 Sam.1&2). God is faithful and will not forsake you. There are many men who can testify that God increased their sperm count. They have children today.
- Never yield to the temptation of wanting a divorce yourself. Two wrongs don't make a right. There is a tendency to say, "Well, if she wants a divorce, so do I. Who the hell does she think she is, treating me like scum?" That won't do at all.
- Where you have done all the above and your wife still insists on divorce, get your lawyer to advise you on the next line of action. Talking to a lawyer will help you distill the critical issues involved in a divorce, such as:
 - o Provision for the welfare of the children
 - o Your safety, if you are being intimidated or threatened
 - o Alimony
 - o Care and custody of the children

Don't do anything to jeopardize the possibility of reconciliation. There is no need for name calling or invocation of curses.

Some women have divorced their husbands only to take them back after being separated for many years. I know a couple who were separated for over 17 years and are re-united today.

Don't rush to remarry if your wife refuses to reconsider her decision to get a divorce. Apart from the fact that remarriage under this condition is scripturally wrong, it will hinder any hope of reconciliation. Remarriage is only biblically accepted after the death of a spouse. This, however, does not refer to death caused by foul means.

Rest in the Lord no matter what happens. When you have done all you can do, leave the rest to God. He says, "Cast your cares upon me and I will care for you." I understand the pain that comes when you have done everything in your power to prevent a divorce yet it still happens. Brace up. All is not lost. There's still something to live for.

SPIRIT SPOUSES AND DIVORCE

One of the foundational causes of divorce can be linked to the interference of certain evil spirits in the marriages of some humans. A spiritual door is opened into an individual's life when his or her ancestors had been involved in idolatry, immorality or wickedness. This is how people contact spirit spouses. In most cases spirit spouses reside in water and are referred to as water spirits. Evidence of the operation of these spirit spouses or water spirits can be seen in persistent cases of eating, playing or having sexual intercourse with strange partners in dreams. They also manifest in the experience of having miscarriages, barrenness and unnecessary contention or strife between a husband and his wife.

If you notice these things in your marriage, confess your sins and the sins of your fathers according to Leviticus 26:40-43. Go to a man of God who understands what deliverance is all about, and prayerfully cut off all links with those spirits by closing the doorways through which they come in to interfere with your life. You could also pray for yourself. But be sure to diligently apply the counsel advocated in the chapter dealing with foundations.

Divorce has been averted in marriages of so many women who had the problem of a spirit husband, a very common phenomenon in most riverine communities.

There is a lot a husband can do to avert divorce in his marriage. Apart from self-examination and the need to change negative attitudes, it is vital for every husband to be less critical of his wife and to value her.

AVERTING DIVORCE BY VALUING YOUR WIFE

Women often leave their husbands because they feel they are not valued. This has often led to depression and other psychiatric disorders in wives.

One husband, a military man, was shocked when a Psychiatrist recommended that his wife be confined in a mental hospital. He sought counsel from his chaplain on how he could help her, and was told to allow his wife to sit on his lap and share her true feelings about him. This was a difficult assignment to undertake, having been so frequently hurt by the wife's complaints of his neglect and lack of care of her deepest needs. Yet he had to obey his chaplain.

He carried her gently and tenderly on his laps. He went on to ask her to tell him how she truly felt about him, almost fearful of what would proceed from her caustic mouth. She was still pouring out complaints when the telephone rang. The man felt like a boxer who was saved by the bell, at the point of being completely knocked out. He left to answer the phone and she was angry,

knowing that one emergency assignment or the other would make him leave home, thereby ruining her golden opportunity.

Yet something happened not only to dissolve her anger, but also to stop her from breaking down. She overheard a comment her husband made over the phone to his commanding officer.

The man's commanding officer, as anticipated, wanted him to do an important assignment that night. But contrary to military ethics, he said, "Sir, could someone else take that assignment tonight? I'm in the middle of a very important time with my wife. It's serious, and I really don't want to leave her at this point" (Gary Smalley, *The Joy of Committed Love*, pp.50).

This simple answer changed the whole mental and marital equation in this family. The woman did not need to be admitted in any mental hospital. Neither did she break down anymore. The husband simply gave a little more consideration and value to his wife and thereby delivered his family from depression and possibly divorce. Besides, he enjoyed an added value to his sexual relations that night, something he had actually denied himself unwittingly.

Chapter Eight

WHEN HUSBANDS BEAT THEIR WIVES

"A husband can, with wisdom, overcome the stubborn disposition of his wife. He can have a happy marriage no matter how emotional his wife may seem."

The principles set out in this book can be practically applied with remarkable results. Many husbands have already done so with amazing testimonies. A husband can with wisdom overcome the stubborn disposition of his wife. He can have a happy marriage no matter how emotional his wife may seem.

In this chapter, we shall examine how some famous husbands in different cultures beat their wives. We shall do so with a view to giving a historical perspective to our analysis as well as prove that husbands need not allow marital problems to overwhelm or defeat them. We'll set the ball rolling here by looking at the way the famous philosopher, Socrates beat his wife, Xanthippe:

SOCRATES AND XANTHIPPE

"AFTER THUNDER COMES RAIN"

Some biographers have noted that Xanthippe, Socrates' partner, was one of the worst wives in all history. This to me sounds like an exaggeration, because I believe no one is bad through and through. Everyone, in fact, has at least one redeeming feature.

Nevertheless, Xanthippe exhibited some really awful traits. For example, she was aggressive, her anger was tempestuous and

sometimes she became out-rightly violent. The great Greek philosopher knew how to handle her rage with his cool and easy going temperament.

On one occasion Xanthippe lashed out angrily at her husband, thundering in such a loud voice that she almost had a heart attack. Her rage was almost uncontrollable. She expected Socrates to fight back, but was quite disappointed that he did not. His silence and quiet demeanour incensed her even more than a physical fight or some verbal retaliation. Xanthippe was so enraged that she poured a bucket of water on Socrates, who still refused to respond, even with this violent provocation.

Although drenched to the skin, like an unfortunate bird on a rainy day, Socrates turned the whole affair into a big joke. Looking straight into the eyes of Xanthippe, now flashing like lightning he laughingly said, "I was expecting that, for after thunder is rain." Of course, you can only imagine how this unexpected response could have maddened Xanthippe. I can picture her stomping and screaming around the house until she was totally drained of strength.

Socrates excelled as a philosopher notwithstanding the temper tantrums of Xanthippe. You too can excel, no matter how "terrible" your wife may be.

HOW JOHN WESLEY COPEDED WITH MOLLY

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Movement, was not exactly a good husband. In fact, one biographer has suggested quite uncharitably that he "must be regarded as one of the worst husbands in history" (Husbands and Wives, pp.145). He was naive about the demands of marriage, which he embarked on when he was 47 years old. He was more interested in ministry to the world, than in his wife.

Nevertheless, there was something good about the way he coped with Molly, who has been rated, with some justification, as "one of the three worst wives in all history". While John Wesley was an apostle of biblical sanctification and holiness, his wife was notorious for strife, contention and a cold spiritual disposition. He was on fire for God and she was less than enthusiastic for God. For a man who delivered over 42,000 sermons, often preaching four to five times a day during his fifty-three year ministry, to crowds of 30,000 at a time, he must have had real problems coping with a helpmeet, who was less than helpful.

Molly had a legendary temper. Yet this did not rub off on her husband. "Evil communication," the Bible says, "corrupts good manners." But John Wesley determined not to be corrupted by his wife's tirades which anyone of lesser spiritual maturity could have responded to negatively. The more Molly harassed Wesley with her tongue, the more he prayed for the Holy Spirit's sanctifying

grace. Her temper tantrums drove him to pray and pray some more. No wonder John Wesley once said "my wife helped me in ministry." She can be likened to the refiner's furnace that purged the carnal from his heart.

Molly sometimes adopted a violent approach in dealing with her husband. A visiting Methodist Minister once reported that he "went into a room and found Mrs. Wesley foaming with fury. Her husband was on the floor, where she had been trailing him by the hair of his head. She herself was still holding in her hand venerable locks which she had plucked up by the roots." How very unfortunate the trying circumstances John Wesley had to live with. But the good thing is that he discharged himself like a good soldier.

Only a man of John Wesley's level of sanctification could have been dragged on the floor by his wife. The added pain of having your hair forcefully pulled from the roots in the process of being dragged on the floor by an uncaring woman must have been very degrading and dehumanising. Yet Wesley took all that in good faith. He knew that two wrongs don't make a right. Therefore, he was willing for Christ's sake to be humiliated without responding negatively. John Wesley may have been naive as a husband, but he is certainly not one of the worst husbands in history, as suggested by one biographer. For a man with his degree of patient endurance, the verdict should be a little kinder.

Wesley teaches us not to abuse our wives verbally or physically even if we are abused. He teaches us that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

THE HUSBAND WHO

FORGAVE AN ADULTEROUS WIFE

Dr. Uma Ukpai often recounts the story of a man whose wife cheated on him and became pregnant in the process. She was so guilt-laden that she decided to voluntarily leave her matrimonial house in the hope of salvaging her conscience. The husband was initially heart broken by her adultery. But he was even more traumatised by her decision to leave him on grounds of self-chastisement.

The woman's husband called her to a meeting with a man of God. He began by stating that he had forgiven his wife and that as long as he lived, he would never refer to her sin of adultery. He further offered to adopt the unborn child and to treat him or her as his own.

Notwithstanding all this show of grace, the woman could not come to terms with her husband's offer. She told him and the minister that she must leave because staying would mean being constantly reminded of her sin. The husband tried to dissuade her to no

avail. When she would not be persuaded to stay, he went another mile to offer grace. He told her to move into one of his buildings. He promised to take care of her and the baby after birth for as long as he lived. As if this was not enough, he further told her that he would never remarry, insisting that she was welcome back into the house any day she changed her mind. The Bible says, "Repay no evil for evil If it is possible as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men Do not overcome evil by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-18, 21).

Chapter Nine

WHEN YOUR WIFE IS NOT TIME-CONSCIOUS

Time is an invaluable resource. It is the basis of calibrating life and it determines the extent to which we are productive. Time is so important that its use or misuse can lead to eternal loss.

Different individuals have different concepts of time. They have different attitudes to time use. This has often created conflicts which, if not managed, could result in tense relationships and even broken covenants.

One of the fundamental complaints of many husbands is the time-wasting habits of their wives. This problem has been the basis of many quarrels between husbands and wives. It has caused many an irritation. It has led to a temporary and sometimes prolonged break in communication. It has even endangered otherwise cordial and loving relationships.

As leaders, husbands operate like military men. Precision is their watchword, and time management is one of the most important weapons in their armoury. They see every event as a war, which must be fought, based on precise and accurate time allocation.

Many men drive themselves on the basis of this military concept of time. They also want to drive their wives with the same philosophy of time. There is a time to do espionage and a time to gather information. There is a time to launch the war—the D-Day. There is a specific time to send in air bombardment to soften up the targets. And there is a time for the infantry to move in to finish off the enemy. The military concept of time is so precise that there is little or no allowance for sloppiness.

Most women do not conceive time in this military format, especially in their relationships with their husbands. They take their time to do what is necessary and sometimes unnecessary. True, there are women who also have this precise and no-nonsense attitude to time use. But these women are largely corporate women who function in the fast-moving competitive world of global business. They are relatively few and are not the typical "house

wives" whose concepts of time are driven by a more relaxed and relationship-driven philosophy.

How do you deal with your wife when she is not time-conscious? What should you do to reduce or eliminate the conflicts that have arisen because of your opposing concepts of the allocation and use of time? Can this problem of time ever be completely resolved? These are questions we shall attempt to answer in this chapter. But let us begin by defining what actually time is and its significance in human relationships.

THE MEANING OF TIME AND ITS

SIGNIFICANCE

Time is the period that lies between two eternities. The first eternity was before the creation of the world and man and the second eternity will come into existence at the climax of history which will usher in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is on the basis of this biblical concept of time that Myles Munroe defines time as a temporary interruption in eternity. The interruption "broke" eternity into two parts. Time, therefore, is a parenthesis in eternity, measured in moments, seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades and millennia.

Time is significant because it is a resource that can be quantified in monetary terms. People get paid on the basis of how much of their time they have invested in doing a task. Time is life and it is in limited supply. We only have a certain amount of time to be alive. Time is short and we must make the best use of it. David in Psalm 89:47 reminded God of how short his time was.

Time is not just short, it is a perishable gift. We cannot afford to waste this gift. Wasting time amounts to committing suicide. It is probably this deep understanding of time that drives most men to use it as efficiently as possible. Nevertheless, what men conceive as the efficient use of time is different from what women think it is. We shall later examine the basis of these different conceptions of efficiency and time use. For now let us examine the profile of the type of woman most husbands see as not being time-conscious. We shall also outline how many men have coped with this problem and whether their coping strategies are adequate.

PROFILE OF WIVES WHO ARE NOT TIME-CONSCIOUS

1. They serve you breakfast at 9:00 a.m. when you are supposed to be at work at 8:00 a.m.
2. They could be as slow as a snail. The "time keeper's" alarm could be ringing and screaming, "There's fire on the mountain. Run, run, run." But they don't mind the alarm. They just take

their time. In other words, they have chosen to walk when they should be running. They are known to crawl when they should be walking.

3. They have an expensive gold wrist-watch on their hand—one they probably forced their husbands to buy for them, but they have no time to look at the watch to gauge the time for different activities. The watch is only a decoration, a golden ornament that should attract them attention and commendation, a beauty ornament which does not beautify their use of time.

4. Such wives cook when they should be sleeping and sleep when they should be cooking. They are fond of chatting with friends when they should be preparing for an important function. Their concept of time is lopsided. They do the wrong things at the right time and the right things at the wrong time.

5. They give their husbands a bad name as latecomers. They are never ready on time for any function. They make you go to church late on the day it's your turn to coordinate the service. They make you abandon government functions because you can't afford to violate state protocol. They know that all dignitaries must be seated before the President or the Governor arrives, but they are still checking out themselves at the mirror when "His Excellency" is already seated. So you either get angry, leave them and go to the function (with the possibility of being queried) or you sit back at home fuming and cursing the day you married them.

6. Their children are always late to school, because they are never prepared for school on time.

7. They are very careless women who never know where their properties are kept. Some of them could drop their bra or underwear in the sitting room and be looking for them in the bathroom. They are always looking for missing items, especially their clothes. They could have a thousand and one suitcases, but they don't have the wisdom of categorizing them, that is, putting specific types of clothes in specially designated suitcases for easy identification and use.

8. They are the kind of women who spend too much time choosing a dress to wear. Their wardrobes are full of clothes of different designs from London, Paris and New York. They have a hard time knowing what to wear. They are known to wear one dress, take it off and try another one. They always want to look their best so they also believe in taking their time to arrive at this objective.

They are the type of women who will go to their husbands ten times in one evening to find out if what they are wearing is okay. Their husbands have been turned into pathological liars. The men are fuming for their time wasting, yet they ask, "How do I look, darling?" They are completely oblivious of the gravity of their "crime". So their husbands look at them and say, "You're

great, you look awesome. Let's go." A husband could tell his wife, "You're great" just to discourage her from trying on another dress.

Some women do not appreciate the tension in their husbands at this point. The men want to keep their appointments and be on time. But the women are more concerned about how they look. A couple who had a dinner appointment got to the function after it ended. The man's wife had been so confused about what to wear that she changed her clothes five different times. Her husband, a typical gentleman, just sat in the car waiting for her. Occasionally he would blast the horn, but not in an angry manner. Three times he went in to see what she was doing and three times he was asked as to the suitability of the dress she was then wearing. Eventually this wife settled for a particular dress. The couple came to the dinner, but they arrived when the other guests were leaving.

THE WAY HUSBANDS HAVE COPEd

Many husbands are so frustrated by the inability of their wives to keep to time that they have adopted unhealthy means of dealing with the problem. Some of the methods men have used include:

1. Shouting and screaming at their wives to get ready.
2. Threatening their wives with sanctions, some of which are never implemented.
3. Leaving or abandoning their wives to functions.
4. Refusing to take their wives to important functions because they'll never be ready on time.
5. Punishing their wives in one way or another because they made their husbands go late to an important function, thereby causing them an embarrassment.
6. Putting their wives to shame in the presence of the children. One husband who was trying to get his children to be ready on time for a function said to them, "I hope you don't delay me like your snail-like mother."
7. Physically beating up their wives for the delay caused them. One man missed an important appointment, which he calculated to be millions of dollars in value, because his wife did not get his clothes and breakfast ready on time. He came back home after missing the appointment and gave his wife a terrible beating that landed her in the hospital.

WHY THESE "SOLUTIONS" ARE

PROBLEMATIC

All the "solutions" outlined above do not really work. They have caused more problems for the husbands who devised them. You cannot afford to use any of them to deal with your wife's inability to be time conscious.

First, shouting and screaming at your wife to get ready may give you unnecessary headache and hypertension. You don't need to compound an already bad situation by making it worse. Once you develop these ailments you will become more easily irritated. Don't open up yourself to be invaded by sickness. Shouting and screaming at your wife to get ready on time may sometimes work. But often it does not. You could shout your head off and some women will only get into the car when they are fully satisfied that they look perfect for the occasion. Shouting at your wife spoils the atmosphere and the occasion you wish to attend. Often what happened at home colours the atmosphere of the evening and leaves a sour taste which is difficult to wipe off.

To threaten your wife is to show disrespect to her. It makes her feel less than human, and reduces her self-esteem and self-worth. Besides, why threaten her with sanctions when there is a better way for dealing with the problem? Those who abandon their wives to attend meetings on time do not know the better way to handle this challenge. You should not adopt their approach in an attempt to solve your problem. Leaving your wife to attend a function will make her angry, rejected and abandoned. A wicked wife could punish you by serving you a rotten or sour dinner. She could wait for you until midnight when your sexual passion is ignited by the sight of her transparent nightgown. And you know what it means to be on "fire" and your wife dampens your enthusiasm by refusing your advances.

Men are sometimes very naïve. A man could shout at his wife all day, fail to be patient with her and at midnight want her to open up to his sexual advances. Well, women don't function that way. You can't abandon a woman to attend a dinner because you felt she was wasting time, and want her to respond to your sexual desires when you return to her at midnight. Her emotions and, of course, her body will be closed up to you. You need a very vital key called "apology" to unlock her. And you should be sure it is not be an ordinary "sweet talk" borne out of your desire for sex. Let your apology be translated into true repentance. That means you must determine not to abandon her again no matter what happens.

Notice that men who abandon their wives because of their time-wasting antics always leave with a tinge of guilty conscience. Deep down them they know that a function without their wives in attendance is not always the same. There is an empty feeling about it, like drinking tea without sugar and milk. There is no point in adopting a carnal solution to deal with a basically spiritual problem.

YOU MUST NOT ABUSE YOUR WIFE

Some men beat their wives for supposed time wasting activities. This is done when meals are served late or when they are not ready at the time stipulated by a husband. Have you ever beaten your wife because she did not meet your need at a particular time?

PRAYER AND COUNSELLING FOCUS

- You must repent if you have verbally or physically abused your wife.
- Ask God to forgive you for using a carnal weapon to deal with a spiritual problem.
- Pour out your heart to God about the challenges you are facing over your wife's lack of time management skills.
- Ask Him for wisdom on what to do.
- Pray that God will deliver your wife from the emotional trauma you may have caused her. Ask God to deliver her from any bondage to fear and anxiety you have created in her.
- Realize that the fact that you paid bride price on your wife does not mean that she is your slave to be ordered and beaten up when she does not meet your expectations. The emotional pain you will cause her if you continue to treat her like an animal is better imagined than felt.

THE TRAUMA OF DORIS OPIYO

Doris's story was recounted by Kwamboka Oyaro and published in the Kenyan Sunday Nation of 28 th November 2004. This was during a sixteen-day period of activism against gender violence in Kenya, which lasted from 25 th November to 10 th December 2004.

Doris's husband was a complete gentleman for the four years they courted before marriage. She had been careful to select her husband because her mother was in an abusive relationship. Anyone who raised his voice at her was never considered a suitable choice. Such a man was " dumped ". Doris thought that her husband fitted her description of a perfect gentleman. But she was shattered three years after marriage when he hit her behind without an explanation while she was tucking in her twin sons into bed. He continued to beat her after then, even in the presence of their children.

Doris, in her story, recounted that "whenever I heard his boots stomping up the pathway to the front door, my heart would beat so fast that I always thought it would burst through my chest. I trembled with fear as I stood behind the door, my hand on the handle, waiting for the deafening knock. I opened the door as soon as I heard it. The timing between the knock and the opening was crucial. If I opened a second too early, he would beat me for

opening for 'an expected lover'. A second too late and I would be beaten for taking my time. Other beatings would be for unbolting the door loudly in order to announce to the neighbours that he had just come home. The 'Opening Ceremony', as I came to call it, gave him an excuse to kick me with his military boots."

"He stepped on my stomach, my chest, my eyes, back . . . everywhere. I pleaded for mercy but he ignored me. When he was through, it felt like a tractor had run over me. Every morning, he would clean my wounds, apologize profusely and promise never to do it again. The worst thing was that I believed him and waited for him to change back to the good man I had fallen in love with and married."

Doris waited in vain until she decided to take responsibility for her life. Her husband would beat her before her twin sons. The boys would cry and plead with their father to "stop hurting mummy", but to no avail. Doris says that "once they even held hands and came between me and their father. He kicked them and they screamed as they landed on the floor near the T.V. He suddenly stopped beating me, gulped down his wine and went to sleep. I spent the night huddled with my sons on the sitting room carpet."

Doris could not tell anyone her plight. She lied to her colleagues at work about the bruises on her face. She could not go to her mother for counsel. Her mother had tolerated and accepted the beatings from Doris' father on the ground that "men always beat their wives". Only with the promptings of her best friend could she summon courage to run away with her children after what seemed a lifetime of cruelty at the hand of her husband. Had she not done so, she probably would have died by now.

Do you also want your wife to run away, your children to be separated from you? Do you want to continue to make a demand on your wife when you have no self-respect? Two wrongs do not make a right; and there is a way that seems right, but it is the way to Hell.

Notice that Doris' husband was notorious for blowing hot and cold. He beat her when she was too slow to open the door. He also beat her when she was too fast. His problem was not really that she had no sense of timing. He was just being cruel or perhaps mentally sick. This created fear and anxiety in her and badly shattered her self-esteem. Is that what you want to do to your wife? Do you want your wife to be afraid of your home coming, preferring that you never returned home? When her husband went for a six month assignment overseas, Doris says, "I remember wishing that it was longer."

HOW TO "BEAT" YOUR WIFE'S LACK OF TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS

There are many things a husband can do to overcome his wife's inability to manage or keep to time. The time you have spent shouting at her or even physically abusing her could be put to better use. You too have wasted God's time if all you have done is to scream at her or beat her up. You will not achieve anything positive by so doing. You may end up losing your wife to separation, divorce or death and that would really be unfortunate.

COUNSELLING FOCUS

To overcome your wife's lack of time consciousness:

- Help her to keep a time log, especially in relation to the functions you must attend with her.
- Try to understand her time-use in relation to the things she is passionate about. Men fail to realize that every human being gives more time to his or her passion. A man may spend four hours in a stadium waiting for a game of football. There are times some stadia open at 8:00 a.m. in the morning for a game billed for 4:00 p.m. The men come in to get strategic seating positions. They are prepared and even happy to wait for a game that is more than 8 hours away. Yet they fail to realize that when women spend two hours to dress up for a meeting, they too are only responding to the demands of giving more time to the things they are passionate about. Thus one man's time wasting could become another woman's investment to look beautiful. A husband who fails to understand this reality could unwittingly become judgmental about his wife's concept and use of time.
- Realize that a woman will take much time to do the things that are a reflection of her personality in the same way a man will give more time to the things which reflect his personality and lifetime focus. The home is often a reflection of the woman's personality while the office is usually a reflection of the man's personality. Men tend to spend more time in the office, just as women tend to spend more time at home. Whatever time a woman gives to the improvement of the home is not wasted by her own conception. A wife could have a lunch or dinner appointment with her husband, yet still attend to what she considers a more important assignment close to the time of the appointment.

A man could be tempted to carry along a baby whose diaper is wet to meet an appointment. But a woman would insist on changing the diaper and saving the child unnecessary discomfort and its associated problem of crying, even if it means being late. She could pick up a broom to sweep the home so it could look neat before leaving for a scheduled appointment. She could delay her movement to make a snack for a hungry child, unlike most men who could insist that the child waits for the regular mealtime.

It is amazing how men accuse their wives of wasting time in the things that define their spouses' passion without realizing that

they probably waste more time in the things that are their own lifetime passion. A problem diagnosed, they say, is half solved. Why not re-examine what you call time wasting in your wife's life? Try to understand why "she wastes" time on these ventures. This will help you appreciate her better. Determine to assist your wife to quicken her pace whenever you can. This can be done in many ways.

HELP HER DO DOMESTIC WORK

Some men, especially in Africa, think that it is demeaning to do so. But there is nothing demeaning about helping out your wife in the kitchen once in a while. After all, Jesus made breakfast for the disciples, His bride, after His resurrection when they were so depressed and confused about His death that they abandoned their commission and went back to fishing. Jesus knew that His bride was confused and depressed at this time. So He decided to minister to them by making their breakfast at the bank of the river. You too can minister to your wife in her moments of tiredness and depression. You will be following the footsteps of your Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

GIVE YOUR WIFE A HOLIDAY

Give her a break when you notice that she is tired. You could sponsor her to go on a holiday alone or go along with her. This will refresh and redirect her focus and energy. Some women work so hard, year in, year out that this slows them down.

EMPLOY A HOUSEHELP TO ASSIST HER

Get your wife a house help to assist her in domestic work. Some men make the mistake of thinking that their wives are idle when they are "slaving away" in their working places. This is far from the truth. A woman who stays at home to look after the children is not unemployed. A husband who pays the bills may think that he is more important than his wife who stays at home. Yet realize that the man may be working for only eight hours in the day, but his wife could be on duty for twenty-four hours. She wakes up in the morning to prepare her husband and children for work and school respectively. She has to make breakfast for them and ensure that their lunch boxes are packed.

She then must clean the house and take care of the toddler who constantly cries to get her attention. She must also quickly prepare for lunch because soon the children in school will be back home. She could stay in the market for a long time. Her schedule is so tight that she barely has time for herself. All this is done with the heavy duty of breastfeeding her baby because she is determined to be baby-friendly.

Only an uncaring husband will see his wife go through this gruesome type of schedule and still think that she is doing nothing. In fact, governments should begin to seriously think

about paying mothers for the thankless jobs they do at home. After all, every good child they nurture to adulthood is an asset to the nation. Pharaoh's daughter unknowingly paid Moses' mother for taking care of baby Moses for her. She drew him out of the water and asked Miriam his sister to get her a Hebrew woman to nurse him until she could bring him into the palace as her son. The mother of Moses, Jechobed, was brought to her. "Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages'. So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water" (Exodus 2:9-10).

Give your wife a housekeeping allowance for her personal use, if you can't get her a house help to assist in domestic work. Housewives work without pay and this is not right. While we push for the legislation to get rich governments to pay mothers an allowance, husbands must appreciate their wives by giving them an allowance for their efforts. This might help them to be a little more time conscious. But to allow a woman to work without pay and still expect her to keep to your time schedules is to ask for too much. Husbands should not be unreasonable and selfish.

With a house help your wife can delegate some of the duties that tie her down. She will be free to attend to your more important needs. This will also reduce her stress and distress levels and preserve her health.

BUY YOUR WIFE HOUSEHOLD GADGETS

Technology has drastically reduced the time duration within which human beings perform tasks. To help your wife to be time conscious, you must provide her the invaluable devices that save time. These are labour-saving and time-saving technologies include:

- A laundry machines
- Electronic Dishwasher
- Electric Grinders and Blenders
- Computers
- Internet access
- E-shopping
- Video-phones
- Generators
- Personal car and driver

These and many more technological innovations can help your wife improve in her use of time. They will help her reduce time wastage and increase her life expectancy. True, some of these gadgets are expensive. Nevertheless, those husbands that buy these things for their wives don't have ten heads. You can achieve whatever you determine to do. Begin with the ones that are not too expensive. Save for those that are, and surprise your wife on her birthday or on your wedding anniversary with a gift that will help her manage her time more efficiently.

USE SPECIAL OCCASIONS TO TEACH YOUR WIFE TIME-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Ordinarily, teaching a woman time management at the point when she has already offended you with her time wasting antics is like pouring water on the back of a duck. It wastes your time and annoys your wife. It is improper to give her lectures on time management when she has annoyed you or kept you waiting because of a wrongly positioned headgear. You'll be wasting your time and causing her pain if you try it. She may listen to your lectures, but throw it back at you, for your insensitivity to her plight. Any woman would want you to help her out with her headgear and not to give her lectures. Lectures given at the time of a woman's need which have no direct bearing on solving her immediate problems are like the lectures delivered by professors who are out of tune with current reality. Their students merely tolerate these boring lectures because they need a certificate, not because they are interested in Mr. Professor's ideas. So don't bother giving your wife a lecture on time management when she will not receive your wonderful ideas. Save your breath for the opportune moment.

This opportune moment is during her birthday or wedding anniversary. First, buy her the present of her life. Then take her out for lunch. And, finally, arrange for a birthday fellowship where you arrange for either a friend or a respected pastor to give a talk. Be sure you have briefed your guest speaker on what you want to achieve at the occasion. Prompt him to choose his text from Psalm 90:10 and 12. "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away . . . so teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Ensure that your guest speaker does not just come to condemn your wife. Remember, it's her special occasion. He must package his message carefully as an advice, which will not be rejected by your wife. Human beings are very sensitive at special occasions and they are also more receptive.

You could also create these special occasions outside the period of birthdays or wedding anniversaries.

COUNSELLING AND PRAYER FOCUS

- Avoid giving lectures when she has not measured up to your expectation.
- Create moments of intimacy when you can nicely and lovingly present the challenges you have had with her attitude to time.
- Do so in a non-judgemental and non-threatening manner.
- Begin by appreciating her in the areas of her strength. Tell her how much you appreciate the things she has been doing for you and how much you love and respect her.
- Encourage her to know that you believe in her capacity to learn.
- Then gently tell her the things you want her to re-examine and change.
- Make restitution to her on the occasions you have been harsh and rude in the process of correcting her.
- Ask her to forgive and pray for you to be more gentle and loving even when she has missed the mark you have set.
- Pray that God will help her to improve on her concept and use of time.
- Ask God to help her to know her priorities so she can major on the things that are major and minor on the things that are minor.
- Ask God to help you and your wife to redeem your times. Pray from Ephesians 4:15-16. "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN FROM

GENERATIONAL SINS

Pray for your children. Ask God to bless them with time management skills so that they will fulfill their life's assignments on earth. Pray from Jeremiah 31:29. "In those days they shall say no more: The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Declare that the sour grapes eaten by you and your wife in any area of life will not set your children's teeth on edge. This prayer is so vital because children tend to face the same challenges faced by their parents in marriage. This was the case with Doris, the woman whose story we told earlier on. Doris says, ". . . I grew up in a violent home. My father used to drink and come home to beat up my mother. I resented him generally. One day—I was about six—I tearfully asked my mother why she stood the beatings, why she couldn't just walk away from it all with us, her four children. She calmly told me that it was normal for husbands to beat their

wives. I did not argue with her and decided that the reason she continued to be in a violent relationship was because she was financially dependent on her husband. I promised myself never to get involved with a man like my father" (Kwamboka Oyaro in Nightmare of an Abusive Marriage, Sunday Nation , 28 th November 2004, p20).

Doris gave herself a firm promise and even took practical steps to ensure she had nothing to do with any man that would even raise his voice at her. She courted and married a man who for the four years of courtship and the first three years of their marriage was a perfect gentleman. Yet later he turned into a beast. What happened? Why did Doris' promise never to marry a man like her father fail?

Lamentations 5:7 says, "Our fathers sinned and are no more, but we bear their iniquity." Similarly Exodus 20:4-6 says, "You shall not make for yourself any carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep my commandments. "

Some people say that's not fair. God should not visit children with the iniquity of their fathers. It's not a matter of whether God is fair or not. There is no doubt that He is just and fair. The reality is that God has made a solution. Anything we honour more than we honour God is an idol. It does not have to be a carved image which you bow down to. It could be a selfish attitude which makes you oppress your spouse contrary to God's commandments on how you must treat her. God expects us to repent of such attitudes or else our children may suffer their consequences. Have you noticed that some of your bullying tactics could be seen in the way your father treated your mother? If you are honest with yourself, you'll see many of your father's or mother's traits in you.

Abraham told a lie that his wife Sarah was his sister to protect himself when he went to Egypt to overcome famine in the land of Canaan.

And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of

Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had (Genesis 12:10-20).

Abraham jeopardized Sarah's life because she could have been sexually violated had God not intervened.

Isaac, Abraham's son, also told a similar lie that Rebekah was his sister. Again it took God's intervention for Rebekah not to be sexually molested by Abimelech the Philistine king of Gerar and his men. God warned them in a dream not to touch Rebekah or they would be dead men. Then Jacob, Isaac's son, deceived his father and took his brother's birthright. And Rachel, Jacob's wife, stole her father's idols and told a lie that she had no knowledge of who took them. She died in labour on the way to Bethlehem, the house of bread.

God truly visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Nevertheless, he has made a way of escape through repentance. Children who notice that their parents had or still have unwholesome habits or worshipped idols can bring identificational repentance on behalf of their parents even if they are dead. Leviticus 26:40-42 gives us the scriptural basis for doing so .

But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies, if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

PRAYER AND COUNSELLING FOCUS

- Re-examine your foundations. Identify and record any unwholesome things. Was your mother the type who fits into the profile of women who had no qualms about time and how to use it efficiently? Was she always late in giving her family food at the right time? Was she the type who chose to walk when she should be running? Was she known to be crawling when she should have been walking? Did your mother have the attitude of doing the wrong things at the right time and the right things at the wrong time?

Was your father a bully? Was he always angry with your mother for her time wasting? Did he shout at her? Did your father beat your mother even when you were there? Did they consult witch doctors to determine which direction their lives should go?

- Confess these sins to God on behalf of your parents. Confess your own sins, which seem to reinforce those of your parents. Acknowledge that you and past generations have walked contrary to God. Acknowledge that the challenges you face today and your inability to deal with them up till now could be a product of the fact that God Himself may have walked contrary to you because of your failure to recognize your iniquity. Acknowledge that the problems have persisted because your uncircumcised hearts are not humbled before God. Accept the fact that up till now you have not accepted your guilt. Ask God to remember His covenant with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. Remind Him that you are spiritual children of Abraham by covenant and that the blessings of Abraham are yours, according to Scripture. Ask God to remember your family for good and take away every reproach of generational sins and iniquity.

- Break every covenant of death and hell and the altars upon which you have experienced marital failure. Stand upon Isaiah 28:18 "Your covenant with shoel will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it."

- Enter into a new covenant of life and peace upon which your marriage will experience the new wine of joy and satisfaction, peace and tranquillity. Stand upon Numbers 25:12-13.

Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

- Raise a new altar, a place of communication and communion with your wife, your children and with God. Isaiah 19:19-20 says, "In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border. And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the Lord because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Saviour and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them".

- Redeem everything you have lost upon this altar by the blood of Jesus. Redeem your time, your love, your children, the resources you have lost, everything. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins " (Colossians 1:13-14). "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Ephesians 1:7-8). "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for

it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree), that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13-14).

- Pray for perfect reconciliation in your family between you and your wife, and between both of you and God. Stand upon the revelation of Colossians 1:19-22: " For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight."

- Raise a sacrificial thanksgiving offering to God. "At midnight I will rise to give thanks to you because of your righteous judgments" (Psalm 119:62).

MORE PRACTICAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR WIFE MANAGE HER TIME

1. Remove the log in your eyes before you see the speck in her eyes. Deal with the numerous ways you waste God's time before you can move easily to assist your wife to save your own time.

2. Help your wife to choose what she would wear for different occasions one day before the appointed time. Your participation in this all-important venture will endear you more to your wife. She will also be proud that her husband approves of what she wears to every given function.

3. Help her to dress up.

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Get her clothes washed and ironed on time.

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Help her to wear and properly position her hat.

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Assist her to tie her "Gele", or head-tie. It takes an African woman a lot of time to knot her head-tie and balance it on her head. Learn how to do it for her. She will be grateful for a thoughtful husband like you.

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Spend more time with your wife than with your friends. Where your treasure is, there will your time be also. Being with her

will make her see how you manage your time. This way, your time management skills will rub off on her.

4. Realize that you may not be able to budget certain things. You can budget time, money and material resources, but there are things you cannot budget. You cannot budget compassion, love, grace, mercy and forgiveness. Your wife and children need these spiritual resources, even if they are the worst human beings. It will take time to give them these things. Whatever time you give in these areas cannot be wasted time. It will be an eternal investment in the most important area of your life—your family.

5. Get your wife to focus on fewer tasks.

6. Help her to concentrate on the tasks that define her life's assignment. If her passion is misdirected outside this area, help her to gradually redirect her passion to the things that define her primary assignment in life.

7. Help her not to major on minors and minor on majors. Encourage her to do the first things first and the last things last. This is the pattern of our heavenly Father and we must follow it as His children.

8. Bind the spirit of procrastination in your wife's life. Procrastination is the thief of time. Teach her to deal with this thief on a daily basis in prayer and through practical action.

9. Help her to pray the words of Psalm 90:12: "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

10. Encourage her to follow the example of Jesus in Mark 1:35: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." In my book *Timeless Principles of Time Management*, I noted in another context that "Jesus was the most efficient user of time. He did the right things at the right time. He allocated His most productive time to the most important tasks. He knew when to work and when to rest. He finished his lifetime assignment in record time. He did in three and a half years what many people cannot do in 30 years. Jesus remains our model as far as the art and science of time management are concerned. Those who follow His pattern will efficiently use their time and greatly maximize their potentials. They will not only become highly productive but will certainly fulfill their destiny."

11. Help your wife to get adequate rest on a daily basis. Show her that even Jesus, our ultimate model, rested daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. Some women can work themselves to death if they are not assisted and encouraged to rest.

LET YOUR WIFE'S LOOSE CONCEPT

OF TIME COMPLEMENT YOUR

REGIMENTED IDEALS

Remember that marriage is a union of two opposites. God often does not bring two people of the same temperament and orientation together in marriage. He may unite a woman who has a loose concept of time with a man who has a strict and regimented attitude to time. These two may initially think that they are incompatible in their understanding, allocation and use of time. They may even have very heated arguments over the management of time. However, what they may call incompatibility is what God calls divine arrangement. If husband and wife realize that there is nothing fundamentally wrong or right with their different concepts of time, they will stop fighting with each other. Rather they will thank God that He sent someone to complement their attitude to time.

Men who have a military concept of time could sometimes be too rigid for the flexibility needed in the real world. Such men would need wives who have a more relaxed and less regimented concept of time. When she herself is being too lazy and slow for the demands of conflict in a combative world, God will use her husband to push her into a more regimented mould. Thus the occasion at hand should determine whose concept of time should prevail.

Nancy Van Pelt has narrated how her rigid, regimental concept of life is often balanced by her husband's relaxed and seemingly unconcerned attitude to things. Seriousness and precision of timing are good virtues. But life is not always that serious and regimented. A time of relaxation is needed when the guns are silent and the human being in the warrior should be projected. Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 4 says, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under the heaven A time to weep and a time to laugh." Don't weep when you should be laughing and don't laugh when you should be weeping. Don't accuse those God appointed to help us. Don't say they are wasting our time in a melancholic venture. Don't accuse those anointed to bring us joy. Don't say they are unserious about life and all its challenging demands. Weep with those who weep at the time appointed for weeping and laugh with those who laugh at the time appointed for laughing.

THE WOMAN WHOSE "TIME-WASTING"

SAVED HER HUSBAND'S LIFE

Kate is married to Jay. Kate has a carefree concept of time while her husband, Jay, is very regimented in his attitude. This seeming incompatibility was a constant source of conflict until Jay had a divine encounter that saved his life.

He was billed to fly from Port Harcourt to Lagos, a distance of about forty-five minutes by air. It took about one hour to drive from their home to the Port Harcourt International Airport at

Omagwa. Jay was packed and ready three hours before the flight. He reckoned that it would take him one hour to get to the airport and he would still have two hours left.

He wanted to set out, but Kate insisted on escorting him to the airport. Jay warned her to be ready when he was ready. That was of course like pouring water on the back of a duck. Jay did everything to get his wife ready on time, but he was utterly unsuccessful. He was grateful that she wanted to escort him to the airport for once. This was unusual. But he was also mindful of not missing his flight, especially since there might be no other flights for the day.

Jay was going to drive out when Kate's delay became unbearable. He wanted to sneak out and later call her to apologize. But he discovered that she had deliberately collected the car keys in anticipation that her husband would play a fast trick on her. Jay was angry, but she was cool and calm.

They eventually got to the airport just at the point the plane was taking off the runway. Jay was furious. He blamed Kate for her laxity and warned her never to escort him to the airport again. Fortunately for him there was another flight so he bought another ticket and flew by the alternative flight. Jay got to Lagos, checked into a hotel and was relaxing in preparation for his business meeting the following day. There was nothing really serious for him to do, so he tuned on the television to watch the 9 O'clock news. The first item on the news sent shivers in his spine. The ADC flight he was supposed to board had crashed and all 143 passengers on board had died. He called Kate immediately and in tears thanked her for saving his life. God had used her "time-wasting " to save Jay's life.

Romans 8:28 says , "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Learn to relax and thank God when you have done your possible best and things still don't turn out the way you anticipated. Don't be too rigid in life. Your opinion or way of doing things may be good, even the most acceptable. Yet God can use a contrary opinion to work out His plans and purposes in your life.

Chapter Ten

WHEN SHE IS TALKATIVE,

AGGRESSIVE AND VIOLENT

Talking is a natural means of communication between two or more persons. Without it inter-personal relationships will be limited and boring, ideas could be lost in the maze of our attempts to grapple with what is on each other's mind. Though talking is natural, it can be done in an unnatural and unhealthy manner. There are people who talk too much. They are classified as

talkative. They tend to say more than the occasion demands. Their words are not often wholesome and what they say are not always accepted.

Both men and women have talking problems. A man can be as talkative as a woman. Nevertheless, it is generally believed that women talk more than men. But no scientific study has completely proven or established this belief. One of the great challenges faced by husbands is the talkative nature of their wives. Of course, there are women who are so quiet that you can hardly hear their voices. The men married to such quiet women are forever thankful to God for sparing them the harassment of unsolicited words. Those who are not so blessed face daily challenges, which most have not been able to deal with.

One husband complained to a friend. "My wife is worse than an American parrot. She talks in the day and talks in the night. She talks to herself and of course to me. Not that I mind. But the problem is that she wants to talk when I want to be quiet. She wants to be awake when I want to sleep. My wife just cannot keep her mouth shut. It's as if there is a machine-gun churning out words in her mouth. She is fast, she is constant, and she is unrelenting." This husband called his wife the most talkative woman on earth. But he is not alone. If he were to hear the stories of other men he would probably be thankful that his wife is not really as bad as he made her out to be.

Another man says that his wife sometimes wakes him up from sleep and demands that he talk to her about anything. Cecil G. Osborne, in the *Art of Understanding Your Mate*, recounts the story of this husband: "My wife sometimes shakes me awake and says, 'Talk to me!' 'Talk to you! What about?' 'Anything. Just talk to me.' 'But I have nothing to talk about.' 'What are you feeling?' 'Feeling? I feel tired, sleepy and a little hostile because you won't let me alone.' 'Good. That is a feeling. Tell me some more. What are you really feeling?' the wife pressed on. (Also cited in *How to Beat Your Husband*, Uzima Press, 2001, pp.37).

When a talkative wife is not talking, she wants her husband to do the talking. Some are so talk-crazy that they don't mind what you say, just as long as you say something. This is a direct reflection of their own inner turmoil. They talk whether there is something to talk about or not. Sometimes mere talking graduates to aggressive behaviour and ultimately to violence. True, fewer women than men are prone to violent behaviour at home. Nevertheless, there are women with aggressive and violent tendencies, which husbands do not know how to handle.

Marriages are so structured that most talkative and aggressive women are married to quiet husbands. This helps to compound the problem because at a point some of these men develop self-doubt. Others feel that they have made a mistake in the choice of a life partner. Yet others begin to respond to their wives in ways which do not glorify God. What can a husband with a talkative wife do?

How should he respond to her aggressive behaviour? Should he just ignore her and behave as if she does not exist? What would happen if she refuses to be ignored? What if she becomes violent?

Many couples do not know each other adequately before getting married. Some have a courtship of a few months and others have a few years. But even the couples that had up to four years of courtship could still be relative strangers to each other until they begin to live with each other after the wedding. It is at the point of living together at close quarters that most couples discover something they consider abominable in their partners. By this time it is too late. The knots have been tied and only death or some other extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of both parties can temporarily dislodge the knots or untie them completely. Some couples know that this is not God's will. They know that God hates divorce. Nevertheless, they have challenges which they would really want sorted out. Yet few know what to do. Are you in this situation? Do you have a wife whom you are uncomfortable with? Does she embarrass you by the way she talks? Is she unreasonable whenever she opens her mouth to say something?

If your answer is in the affirmative, then don't just sit there thinking that this is the end of the world. It could be a glorious new beginning for you. It could lead into a new ministry which you never knew you had capacity to do. In fact the situation you face could give you fresh insights into your own character and attitudes. It could show you new dimensions of your life that you never thought was in you. Just trust me as we undertake this journey of analyzing the challenges you face in your relationship with your wife. Allow the Lord to open your eyes and minister to you that you might be equipped to minister to your wife and others who are like her. Let us continue our journey by exploring the profile of a talkative and aggressive wife.

PROFILE OF A TALKATIVE AND

AGGRESSIVE WIFE

1. She talks before she thinks.
2. Her mouth arrives at her chosen destination before she grudgingly drags her brains there, if ever she does.
3. Her husband may speak ten words while she has grossed more than ten thousand.
4. She always jumps into a conversation initiated by others without a formal invitation. She feels she has a right to make her own contributions too.

5. Her husband could be making a point and she rudely cuts in to interrupt him when she could well have waited for him to finish before making her point.

6. Her mouth moves like a high-speed locomotive. And sometimes she does not know when to start talking and when to stop.

7. The velocity of her words (when she is angry) could be as fast, if not faster than the Concord plane which has now been grounded permanently. Most husbands also wish that their wives' mouths could be grounded, at least for a while.

8. She has no concept of secrecy. Everything to her is like an open book. Those who have eyes to read are free to read; and those who are blind can hear it read by unlicensed and unaccredited BBC reporters like her.

9. She could shout on the housetop what was told her in a secret chamber. She is a talebearer and cannot wait to see someone with a willing ear to offload her merchandise.

10. She is an extrovert. She gives her opinion even when it is not solicited.

11. She could be very pushy, always wanting to be in the forefront.

12. She likes to say it as it is. She has no patience with the art of diplomatic speaking. It's a big bore to her. Diplomacy is bunk!

13. Nobody can stand in her way. She wants to get what she wants at all times. And God help you if you are standing in her way.

14. She could be impatient with those who don't know how to talk like her, especially her husband.

15. She is often ruled by a nagging spirit.

16. She is the kind of woman who answers your question with another question. Her husband could ask her, "Why are you talking like that?" And she'll respond "And why shouldn't I talk? What do you think my mouth was created for? Decoration?" You ask her one simple question and she gives you a triple-barreled complicated counter-question. Most husbands are either forced to just leave her alone or aggravate her the more, by demanding an answer to their question.

17. She is a mistress in the unwholesome art of grumbling, complaining and murmuring.

18. She can exaggerate situations and falsely accuse her husband without any qualms.

19. She is often ruled by the spirit of Jezebel. She seeks to manipulate, dominate and control her husband and any other person around her. Those who are not weary of her tactics can be turned into her wimps in the same way Jezebel turned Ahab into a wimp.

20. She is also ruled by the spirit of covetousness and could do anything to get whatever she wants from anyone whether they like it or not.

21. Her words are caustic and her mouth is conceived as a versatile weapon of offence and defence. You can't speak a word against her without eliciting a violent verbal volley of words in response.

22. She could also be sarcastically humorous or humorously sarcastic.

Does this long list in any way describe your wife? If your answer is yes, then sit back and let's see what can be done. However, don't despair. Don't lift up your hands in surrender. Don't even consider any options contrary to the commandments of the word of God. There is no situation that is beyond God. There are no circumstances He cannot help you to deal with. To the living there is hope. And I am certain that God will make a way for you.

DON'T RESPOND TO YOUR WIFE IN THE

WRONG WAY

Some husbands, in an attempt to deal with their talkative wives, try to out-talk them. This will not work. You probably don't have the skill or expertise to out-talk your wife. If you try it, you may end up biting your tongue and you will be the worst for it. No man can successfully learn to be left-handed in old age? Besides, what's the point you want to prove? You are not in a talking competition with your wife and there are no prizes to be won.

You can be sure that your wife will always talk more than you. The danger here is that you might be tempted to prove a point by hitting her when you find that you are not her match in the art of verbal warfare. This is how domestic violence begins. When a man finds out that his wife is winning a verbal war, he changes the rules of engagement and strikes out at her with his hands. You don't want the Devil to tempt you to do that, do you? The Bible says we should give no place to the Devil. He is a crafty personality, always looking for an occasion to spoil your relationships. "Therefore, Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 st Peter 5:8-9).

ADOPT THE STRATEGY OF

TEMPORARY SILENCE

There is a place for temporary silence in the confrontation with your wife. In fact if two people are fighting verbally and one person suddenly stops talking and withdraws tactically from the battlefield, the war automatically ends. Learn to adopt this strategy. But please make sure it is a tactical and temporary silence, not a permanent cold war in which the bridge of communication is completely broken down. Ignoring your wife by keeping total silence will not work. It will create an unhealthy atmosphere of bitterness in your marriage. Some men are masters in the art of cold treatment. They could stop talking to their wives as a means of hurting them. Others stop eating anything cooked at home by their wives. All these are carnal weapons which create additional problems of their own. In my book *Marah: Breaking the Bondage of Bitterness and Barrenness*, I discussed the problem of cold treatment and lapses in communication as indications of bitterness and barrenness. I told the story of a couple who lived in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, which I will take the liberty of reproducing here. They had a disagreement which led to what looked like a permanent cold war. Husband and wife did not speak to each other for three weeks even though they lived in the same house.

"The man had an important business trip to make to Lagos, a distance of about forty-five minutes by air. The trip was endangered by the fact that he slept late and woke up late. He needed to catch the first flight to Lagos from Port Harcourt at 7:30 a.m. His home was about one hour's drive to the Port Harcourt International Airport because of the incessant traffic jams. Fortunately, his wife usually slept early and woke up early.

Instead of verbally telling his wife to wake him up so he could catch the first flight from Port Harcourt to Lagos, he chose to drop a note for her. Remember, they had not spoken to each other for three weeks. 'Please wake me up at 5:00 a.m. so I can catch the first flight to Lagos,' he wrote. The note was tucked by the side of his wife's bed. She apparently woke up early enough but decided to attend to her husband's request her own way.

The man slept till 10:00 a.m., by which time he had missed the first flight and, of course, the appointment in Lagos. He woke up, checked the time and was furious. He was just about to get out of bed to go and beat up his wife for failing to wake him up when he saw a note tucked by his own bedside. It was written by his wife and it read: 'Please wake up. It is 5:00 a.m.'

RECOGNIZE THAT MARRIAGE IS A

UNION OF TWO OPPOSITES

We made this point in the last chapter in relation to dealing with a wife who is not time conscious. Let's look at it again in

the context of differences in communication. Understanding that marriage is a union of two opposites can be one of the greatest revelations that will transform your relationship in every respect. We noted earlier that God does not often bring two persons of the same temperament in a marital relationship. We concluded that what many people call incompatibility in their relationships is what God calls divine arrangement.

God knew that you are a quiet unassuming person, so he deliberately joined you with a talkative and more aggressive woman. You may say that your temperament is better than your wife's, but this may not exactly be the case. Quiet men are sometimes too slow to respond to certain needs that should be addressed promptly. They could be ruled by the spirit of procrastination in the name of weighing all the options before a decision can be made. Such men could also be too cool for God's liking in moments when spiritual violence is needed. After all, Jesus said that "from the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent shall take it by force." Not all aggression is negative and not all violence is satanic. Jesus took a whip and drove out those who polluted the temple. He angrily turned their tables over and scattered their merchandize and their money. Yet He is still referred to as the Lamb of God, meek and lowly. There is a time to be a lamb and there is a time to be a lion.

God put the nature of a lamb in you. But He also wanted you to be blessed by the lion in your wife. That sounds crazy, but it is true. Sometimes the reverse is the case. The husband could be the lion and the wife the lamb. When a couple lacks this revelation the lamb in the man could hate the lion in the woman. An ignorant husband could desire to crush the aggressive nature in his wife not knowing that God gave it to him for use at the appropriate time. There is a time of danger when the lion must be fully released to take charge; and there is a time of relative peace when the lamb should be in control. This will enable families not to be fighting when they should be at peace and not to be at peace when they should be fighting.

Some husbands could not have been where they are today socially or economically were it not because of the aggressive promptings of their wives. Some men are owners of estates today because their wives pushed them. These women may on occasions have compared their husbands to their friends. "Don't you see what Mr. Peter is doing? Can't you borrow a leaf from him?" She may have said. Such words could deeply wound a man, because no man wants to be compared to another man, especially when the other man is standing on a better social or economic ladder. Husbands abhor such comparisons. Nevertheless, in their quieter moments sensible men reflect deeply on what their wives may have said carelessly without consideration of their husband's emotions. These men turn out to do the very things they shouted down their wives for. Progress in a man's life is often a product of an issue that was once a controversy between him and his wife. At the point of the

controversy, most men behave as if their wives are talking rubbish. They put them down, condemn their views and yet end up implementing the very things they opposed. It's amazing how the women end up winning in the long run, albeit without being acknowledged and awarded any trophies.

As you examine these issues, you will notice that your wife's aggressive mien has complemented you on many occasions. It has in fact delivered your family from being overwhelmed by hawkish outsiders. Some men cannot say no to any request, even when it is not convenient for them. They lack the courage to tell people their inability to help them. It has taken women who say it the way it is to deliver such men. They may not be diplomatic, yet God uses them when decisive action is needed. True, such women could embarrass you when diplomacy is needed to tackle a given problem. But to condemn them out-rightly and brand them useless merely because they have once in a while allowed their mouths to be faster than their brains is to be unfair. This amounts to calling good evil or giving a dog a bad name to hang it.

COUNSELLING AND PRAYER FOCUS

- Take a piece of paper and write down the ways you and your wife are different. Go beyond the issue of communication, which we are discussing in this chapter. Note the following areas:

- - Handling of finances
- - The grace of hospitality
- - The fervency of praying
- - The handling of the children
- - Personal discipline
- - Reading and writing ability
- - Focus in ministry, etc.

- Ask God to give you a revelation of the fact that marriage is a union of two opposites.
- Repent of the many occasions you called something good in your wife evil. Ask God to deliver you from the woes in Isaiah 5:20-21: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"
- Thank God for giving you a wife who complements you. Appreciate Him for not making your wife exactly like you in every respect.
- Ask God for the grace not to fashion your wife into your own mould, but to help her to manifest the best possible attributes of her temperament without all the negative aspects. Ask God for grace to help your wife to unfold the best in her rather than to mould her into what God did not intend her to be.
- Appreciate God for the many occasions God has used your wife to compel you to do something which under normal circumstances you would not have done. Thank God for working in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform in your family.
- Take authority over the devil that comes to steal, to kill and to destroy the joy of the Lord in your relationship. Release the grace of the Lord Jesus that gives life more abundantly (John 10:10).

MEET YOUR WIFE'S NEED FOR COMMUNION AND COMPANIONSHIP

To the natural man, it may seem as if your wife is talkative. Indeed, it may well be that she talks too much. But try to see a need in her "unnatural" behaviour. Go beyond her chatty nature and see a woman that is looking for a companion with whom she can establish a deep communion. Do your best to meet her need for companionship, communion and communication.

1. Stop criticizing her. Avoid calling her a parrot.
2. Find ways in which you can sit down and listen to her, even if you may not want to talk as much as she wants you to. Every good "talker" wants a good listener. In the past, you may have listened to her haphazardly. That is why you often say to her, "Pardon me. What did you say?" Notice how this has often offended her and exposed the fact that you don't listen to what she is saying most of the time.
3. Ask God to change this "offensive" attitude.
4. Tell Him to help you pay more attention to what your wife is saying.

5. When you start really listening and paying attention to what your wife is saying, then you will be in a better position to correct her when she is going off the hook. She too will be better willing to listen to your counsel. Maybe you could even help her to know when to be quiet and when to speak. She will begin to learn one or two things from you on how to think before speaking and how to pause and let another person make a contribution without rudely interrupting him or her.

6. Discuss your change of attitude towards her. Let her know that your ears are more available for her now. One woman told her husband, a pastor, to give her an exclusive time of two hours every day to just sit and talk with him. She complained of not having enough of her husband's ears. She said she didn't mind even if he said nothing in those two hours. She was content to have her husband hear what she had to say.

DEAL WITH THE OSTRICH MENTALITY IN YOU

The ostrich is an animal, but it pretends to be a bird. It has the gift of wings, but it does not bear the fruit of flying. In times of danger, this "bird", which can run 130 kilometers in an hour digs the earth and pins its entire head in the soil. It assumes that the danger will disappear by pinning its head in the soil. In *How To Beat Your Husband II*, we noted that "your problems will not disappear by hiding your head in the sand. What you fail to confront today will confront you tomorrow."

Most husbands do not respond to the needs of the family identified by their wives. They take too long to deal with some of the simplest problems. Their wives become impatient with them and tend to nag as a result. A bed may be broken down, but a man finds it difficult to fix it. The bulb may be dead, but he'd rather light a candle for two days than go out and buy a bulb to replace the dead one. A wife wants a new gas cooker, because the oven of the old one is bad, but the man is thinking about repairing the old one so he does not have to spend money buying an entirely new cooker. The curtains are as old as the ones Moses used for the tabernacle in the wilderness, but the man insists that there's nothing wrong with the old blinds. The list can go on and on.

Many women get frustrated by the ostrich mentality of their husbands. A woman wants the problems at home addressed, promptly, painstakingly and purposefully. She is offended and frustrated when she notices how prompt you are in meeting the needs of outsiders and those in your office. This is why she tends to talk too much. She hopes that her much talking will get you to pull out your ostrich-like head from the ground of inaction to address her needs. She wants you to stop pretending as if you don't know what is at stake.

Women get offended when they tell you what they need and you just sit on the couch and say, "Ehe! Ehe!" Some husbands may be

thinking about the most rational way of addressing their wives' needs, but they never tell their wives what they are thinking. Your wife did not go to school to learn how to read your mind. Sit down and tell her, "Honey, I've heard you. I don't have the money to buy you a new cooker now, but I'll get you one next month ending." Every sensible woman will wait till next month ending. Some women, however, get frustrated when the month has ended and they don't see the gas cooker you promised them. Herein lies the problem. Husbands just make promises they don't keep. These promises are sometimes made under pressure. They just want to dismiss their wives so they can continue to watch the football game on T.V.

Please stop playing the fool like an insincere politician. You are no more a bridegroom looking for a potential bride whom you will promise Heaven if she marries you when you have no intention to fulfill your promises. Someone once said that "bridegrooms are like politicians. They forget their campaign promises after the election has been won." You are no more a bridegroom. You are now a husband. Behave like a faithful husband. Keep to your promises, else you will be courting the verbal missiles of your wife. And don't forget: "Your problem will not disappear when you hide your head in the sand. What you fail to confront today will confront you tomorrow." So cut out the ostrich mentality. Stop pretending that you cannot see the problems identified by your wife. Pull up your head from the ground, look squarely at your problems and solve them. That's the way a real man should behave.

NEVER ALLOW EVIL COMMUNICATION TO

CORRUPT YOUR GOOD MANNERS

We noted earlier that some husbands want to talk more than their talkative wives. Some become even more aggressive and violent. 1st Corinthians 15:33 says, "Do not be deceived: Evil communications corrupt good manners". It is a little leaven that leavens the whole lump (1st Corinthians 5:6). A Gambian proverb rendered on BBC Network Africa says that, "When a dog decides to make a goat his friend, he must be prepared to eat grass." But I say not necessarily. A dog who is a friend to a goat does not have to eat grass. He can decide to go for something else if the grass is poisonous. In the same way a husband does not have to become talkative merely because his wife is. God calls us to emulate what is good in each other, not the things that are bad.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Ask God to teach you and your wife how to follow good and not bad examples. Pray that He will make you good examples to each other. Pray that He will make you an example of the believer to those around you. "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example of the believers in word, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Ask God to make you an example in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity that your

light will so shine forth before men that they may glorify your Father who is in Heaven.

- Pray that the words of your mouth and those of your wife's mouth will be acceptable to God and to men. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).
- Pray for the grace to guard your mouth, to put a muzzle on it, so your speech will edify rather than offend. "I said, I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle while the wicked are before me" (Psalm 39:1).
- Tell God Himself to set a guard over your mouth. Ask Him to keep watch over the door of your lips. "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).
- Refuse corrupt communication from proceeding from your heart and mouth. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impact grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth (Colossians 3:8).

Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering. Decide to bear each others burdens.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful (Colossians 3:12-15).

BECOME A MODEL OF GOOD

COMMUNICATION TO YOUR WIFE

In How To Beat Your Husband II, we noted that good communication involves saying the right things at the right time with the right attitude, the right tone and the right response. Jesus is the ultimate model of good communication. But you too can become a model to your wife. After all, Paul said to his disciples, "Be ye followers of me even as I am a follower of Christ." So you follow Christ, so that your wife can follow after you.

In the seven letters He wrote to the seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3 we see the perfect pattern of communication as outlined by the Lord Jesus Himself. In each of these letters, except for the one to the Church in Philadelphia, Jesus laid down five basic structures for communication:

1. He Stated His Authority . "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Revelation 2:1).

2. He Stated the Positive Qualities of the Church . "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Revelation 2:2).

3. He Stated the Negative Qualities of the Church .
"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love (Revelation 2:4).

4. He Made a Call for Change . "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent (Revelation 2:5).

5. He Gave a Promise for Obedience . "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7).

Notice that Jesus began addressing the problem with each church by stating His authority for doing so. He then identified the positive qualities of each church, then their negative attributes. He went on to make a call for a change and then gave a promise for obedience.

Often husbands jump into stating the negative things about their wives without any acknowledgement of their positive or good attributes. This is a form of bad communication. It does not solve relational problems but compounds them. It does not enhance cordiality but breaks it.

Suppose you want to address the problems of talkativeness, aggressiveness and violence in your wife. What must you do, using the five patterns of good communication outlined above? Begin with stating your authority. You could say something like this "My darling, you know I am your husband and I love you so much." Then move on to outline her positive qualities. Yes, every woman, no matter how bad she may be has something good about her. Tell her how much you appreciate her beauty—that's of course if you think she is beautiful. Tell her how you have seen the translation of this beauty in the way she cooks. Appreciate her for the wonderful dishes she makes for you and the children. Tell her how you can barely wait to come home to eat her meals.

Having spent time detailing all her positive qualities, move on to the main issue at stake—the negative thing you want to address. Tell her that you have noticed that she sometimes talks too much. Point out to her that she also unconsciously (emphasize

the word unconsciously nicely and tenderly) interrupts people when they are speaking. Tell her that this sometimes makes you uncomfortable.

Go on to make a call for her to change. Here emphasize that she could become a better conversationalist, even a wonderful public speaker, if she could make adjustments. Tell her that God is preparing her for leadership in the future and how proud you are of what He intends to do with her.

This kind of talk will not repulse your wife. On the contrary it will get her thinking of how thoughtful and caring her husband is. It will make her make positive changes which will enhance her relationship with you.

NEVER ALLOW YOUR WIFE TO TALK YOU

INTO DOING WHAT IS WRONG

A woman with a Jezebelic spirit could talk her husband into doing what is wrong. The spirit of Jezebel manifests in the form of manipulation, domination and control.

Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was the physical representation of this spirit entity. She killed Naboth because he refused to give his vineyard to Ahab, her husband. She accused him falsely, got men to testify against him and set up a Kangaroo Court to effect his destruction. She then proceeded to hand over Naboth's vineyard to her husband. Ahab was a weak husband who allowed his wife to usurp his authority. She wrote letters in his name, signed it and was effectively the real power behind the throne of the nation.

An otherwise good woman could be ruled by the spirit of Jezebel without knowing it. She too could manipulate, dominate and control her husband in such a way that he could do what he would not ordinarily do. Sarah, for instance, compelled her husband to have extra-marital sex with Hagar, so that God's promise of a child for their family would be fulfilled.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her. And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai (Genesis 16:1-2).

This was the beginning of trouble for the family. No sooner had Hagar conceived than she despised her mistress. Instead of genuinely acknowledging her wrong, Sarah lashed out at Abram. "Then Sarai said to Abram, My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The Lord judge between you and me" (Genesis 16:6). Abram failed to take charge of the situation. He gave Sarah permission to do whatever she wanted. ". . .

Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please" , he said. This could have been dangerous. Sarah actually dealt so harshly with Hagar that "she fled from her presence." Abraham allowed himself to be manipulated; first, to have sex with his maid, and then to give an unrestricted permission to his wife to deal harshly with Hagar when she was carrying his illegitimate child.

The spirit of manipulation, domination and control is one you must deal with in your wife. This Jezebelic spirit is not found in women only. In fact it manifests even more in men. So also look into your own life to see whether this spirit has been given a foothold. Note that the spirit of Jezebel cannot be dealt with by the use of carnal weapons. Shouting and screaming at your wife will not drive away the spirit of Jezebel in her.

COUNSELLING AND PRAYER FOCUS

- Don't go calling your wife Jezebel. That won't help matters at all. She may grab the nearest bottle to break your head and this will rather compound your problem.
- Remember that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. So we are not really dealing with your wife or yourself, but a spirit being that may be ruling both of you.
- Make no allowance for the spirit of Jezebel in your home. God will not be happy with you. Revelation 2:20. "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."
- Bring repentance on your behalf and on behalf of your wife over the manifestations of the spirit of Jezebel in your marriage.
- Identify the nature of this spirit and then renounce and reject its influence in your family.

■

Jezebel is a very religious spirit. This spirit hates repentance. "And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. "

■

It promotes sexual immorality.

■

It persecutes God's prophets and attempts to defile them.

■

It uses the judicial system to promote injustice.

■

It is the spirit of covetousness.

■

It loves to teach and uses every avenue available to it to disseminate its idolatry, wickedness and immorality.

■

It is a blood thirsty and violent spirit.

- Ask God to give you the anointing of Jehu to deal with this spirit. Spiritual violence is needed to defeat the spirit of Jezebel.

- Raise a proclamation against this spirit. Ask the Lord to uncover her activities in your family by uncovering her skirt. Pray with Isaiah 47:1-11:

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man. As for our redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

If you don't deal with the spirit of Jezebel, the spirit of Jezebel will one day deal with you. A pastor had his private parts cut off by his wife because he refused to have sex with her until their HIV status was determined. He had cause to doubt her faithfulness to him while he was away in Bible School. Offended by her husband's impudence, this woman took a machete and severed his organ. Only a violent spirit could have motivated her to undertake such a bizarre operation.

Deal with the spirit of Jezebel before it deals with you. Bind it. Call it to sit on the ground without a throne in your home. Unveil it, uncover its skirt, let her shame and nakedness be seen. Ask God to kill her children with death as Revelation 2:23 says. Make a proclamation that in " a moment, in one day, she will experience the loss of children, and widowhood: They shall come upon her in their perfection for the multitude of her sorceries, and for the great abundance of her enchantments." Call forth fire to burn her and her altars of wickedness.

Remember that none of these prayers should be directed at your wife as a person. You must direct your attack against the spirit of Jezebel while you ask God to give your wife the mind of Christ.

Chapter Eleven

WHEN SHE IS SUFFERING FROM INFERIORITY COMPLEX AND PATHOLOGICAL FEAR

Women globally are in a sorry state of emotional instability. The problem is compounded when you examine the state of women in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Those from these areas probably have twice as many problems as their counterparts in Europe and America. The mental state of women have been messed up by the circumstances they face in their marital relationships, the social barriers established against them from time immemorial, the historical foundations of gender discrimination, the persistence of domestic violence and, in some cases, gender genocide.

Families are full of women with multi-dimensional psychological problems, inferiority complexes and fear of the future. These women are in an unhealthy state of mind, which makes them feel that they have been perpetually consigned to a lowly rank in society. Nothing they do will ever elevate them beyond the perceptions of society. So why try? Some have given up on themselves. Others who believe that something can be done are fighting against entrenched patriarchal systems which perpetuate discrimination upon the foundations of century-old religions and cultures.

Women have been so cowed and cajoled for a long time that the generational impact of discrimination and cruelty against them is

manifesting more and more in ways which are causing great concern to public health officials.

EVIDENCE OF INFERIORITY COMPLEX

Inferiority complex in your wife can manifest in several ways.

1. Lack of confidence when she is amongst other women or her peers.
2. A tendency to be exclusive, isolated and withdrawn.
3. A sense of dependency, which makes her unable to make decisions of her own even in matters that directly concern her well-being.
4. The creation of a comfort zone, which is highly protected, and out of which she does not want to step out.
5. A tendency to reject anything new because she is not familiar or used to it.
6. The acceptance of stagnation and unwillingness to move forward.
7. The belief that only certain people can do certain things. People of her type will never reach certain heights.
8. The construction of a self-limiting barrier which she makes no attempt to cross. The barrier is mentally constructed, is invisible and can only be broken by a new mindset.
9. The belief that others are the leaders and her role is just to follow their guidelines.
10. The refusal to take up leadership responsibilities even when she seems to have all the external credentials to perform.
11. A tendency to remain a mere appendage of her husband through whom she defines her identity and receives her self-worth and significance.
12. A terrifying and paralyzing fear of what would happen to her and the children if her husband leaves her or if he dies.
13. A stunted emotional growth, which limits courage and confidence in herself and in God.
14. A feeling of hopelessness and frustration, which manifests as self-pity and utter resignation to fate.
15. A lack of determination to grow spiritually to the point of taking up responsibility for herself, her family, nation and the Kingdom of God in general.

Some husbands who discover these features in their wives think that the best way to deal with them is to get another wife. Many African politicians, during the early post-colonial era, took second and third wives when they suddenly discovered the limitations in their first wives. Till date we have some big men who keep one special wife for official functions and several others for breeding children. Those for breeding children are usually behind the scenes. They are rarely seen or heard. Only the special wife appears with him at public functions. She speaks on behalf of the other wives, some of whom resent her because they feel there is nothing she has that they don't have.

Other husbands may not go as far as marrying other more confident and articulate women, but do nothing about the situation they find themselves in. They sit there hoping that one day the problem will solve itself. Some others just don't bother. Their uncaring attitudes result in compounding the problems of their wives. They don't get the best in marriage because they have refused to assist their wives fulfill their roles as suitable assistants or appropriate aides.

MARRIAGE IS AN INSTRUMENT OF REDEMPTION

For a husband to help his wife overcome her inferiority complex, or indeed any other inherent problems he must understand that marriage is an instrument of redemption. Redemption is the process of seeking, finding and recovering something that is lost. The first demonstration of the process of redemption happened in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they died spiritually as indeed God had promised they would. They lost the glory of God and were spiritually disconnected from Him. Fear and a feeling of shame (things that were not there before) came into their lives. They ran to hide themselves. They sewed fig leaves of deception to cover their nakedness. They began to pass the buck and play the game of blame-hunting. Adam blamed his wife for violating God's commandment and Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her. They were lost. Nevertheless, God was determined to recover them even though He allowed them to suffer the consequences of their sinful actions. "Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). This was not just the first sign of atonement. It was the very first evidence of redemption. It depicted what Jesus came from Heaven to do on earth, to seek and to save the lost.

Remember that our relationship with Jesus is a marital relationship. Isaiah 54:5 says that "Our Maker is our husband and the Lord of hosts is His name" To establish this relationship, Jesus left the glories of Heaven and came to the earth, a howling wilderness of sin and defeat to rescue and redeem us. The process of redemption demands that there must be an agent of redemption and there must be someone to be redeemed. The agent of redemption is whole, but the one to be redeemed has a problem. The agent of redemption is high up, but the one to be

redeemed is down in the mud. The agent of redemption is full of love, mercy and grace, but the one to be redeemed is an epitome of hatred, bitterness and disgrace. The agent of redemption has all it takes to undertake the task of redemption, but the one to be redeemed is hopeless and helpless on his own; he has nothing.

Our marital relationship with Christ is a locus classicus of the process of redemption. Jesus, our kinsman-redeemer, left the glory and splendor of Heaven to mingle with man on earth. He came down to take us from the dunghill so that where He is we too can be. It was Benny Hinn that said: "The Son of God became the son of man that we sons of men can become the sons of God." The process of redemption came by a costly price of death on the Cross. It was a classic demonstration of love in action.

God wants you to demonstrate the same love to your wife. Leave your Olympian height of glory and virtue, go down to your wife in the murky waters of defeat and low self-esteem. Pick her up from the ground and take her to your mountain of courage and confidence. "But I've tried to do that before, and she rejected my efforts," you may say. Yes, but you must also realize that trying once or twice is not good enough. Complaining that she rejected or abused the privilege of your trying to help her will not justify you. Every agent of redemption will be rejected by the very people he or she is sent to redeem. Jesus came to His own people and they rejected Him. He could do no mighty miracles in Nazareth, His hometown, because of His people's unbelief. Nevertheless, He still died for them on the Cross. Every agent of redemption must pass through rejection, pain, and false accusation and sometimes even death. Nevertheless, because the task at hand is so significant and the consequences of failure so grave, they persevere and overcome rejection. They see the glory of the Promised Land and they are encouraged to endure to the end. Jesus, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame. He made Himself of no reputation. He took the form of a servant and died the death of the Cross. Therefore God has also highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every other name, that at the mention of the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11).

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

There is a blessing in playing your role as a redemptive agent to your wife. There is joy and gladness awaiting you.

IDENTIFY THE FOUNDATIONS OF YOUR WIFE'S

INFERIORITY COMPLEX

From all indications, you were created to be your wife's agent of redemption. You must apply the process of your own redemption by Christ to deal with your wife's inferiority problem. He loved you unconditionally even when you were dead in sin. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). He knew that the root cause of our problem was sin and He came primarily to pay the penalty for sin.

First, identify the root cause or foundation of your wife's problem. Psalm 11:3 says "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Nothing but to identify those foundations. Find out what caused their destruction and seek for a suitable and effective strategy for rebuilding them.

Many women suffer from an inferiority complex which is deep-seated in foundations that were laid long before they were born. Some of these foundations have lasted from generations to generations. They have become institutionalized by tradition and accepted as cultural icons. This is why they are sometimes so difficult to uproot. But with God nothing is impossible to uproot, especially when it perpetuates injustice, discrimination and pre-mature death.

Several factors could be responsible for a woman's inferiority complex. These include:

1. Her husband's initial negative attitude towards her.
2. Emotional trauma arising from childhood abuse.
3. Gender-based inequalities in society which limits self-confidence.
4. Sexual abuse in adulthood by her husband or someone else.
5. Lack of employment resulting in financial dependency on her husband.
6. Negative in-law attitudes towards her resulting in rejection.
7. Barrenness or not having a male child for her husband.
8. Fear of the future or the unknown which leads to emotional and physical paralysis.

9. Gross limitations in her education which breeds lack of confidence.

Let us examine some of these factors in greater detail with a view to identifying how they can be addressed in your wife.

YOUR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS HER

A husband can make or mar his wife's confidence. A very confident woman can be so hassled and harassed by her husband that she could lose her composure five years after marriage. In the first chapter, we recounted the trauma of Doris Opiye. We saw how her husband verbally and physically abused her to the point that she lost her confidence. Her mind was often blank at work. She dodged when she was called upon to make sales presentations, which she had hitherto done with confidence. She lost the will to live until her friend came to her rescue.

Physical abuse is bad, but verbal attacks could be more traumatic. Long after the physical pain of being hit by a husband is gone, the emotional consequences remain for years. One husband called his wife "a foolish goat." Another said his wife was like an "ugly hippopotamus", because she is plump. Yet he saw her to be so before he got married to her. He had known her potentials to grow fat.

Have you said negative things against your wife? Have you called her bad names? One husband calls his wife "ugly mongoose". He would almost beat her to death when she refuses to respond to this ugly name. Another man in drunken stupor told his friends that his wife is the "Demon of Chilulabonbwe".

You can't call your wife by a bad name without calling yourself by that same name. Two of you are one flesh. You are as much an "ugly mongoose" as you think your wife is. And if you say she is a demon, then you are the husband of a demon. Repent now, because God will judge every idle word that proceeds from your mouth. Matthew 12:35-37 says, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

EMOTIONAL TRAUMA ARISING FROM CHILDHOOD ABUSE

Every abused child will suffer from inferiority complex. The problem usually persists into adulthood if it is not dealt with. Children are abused when their parents:

1. Shout and scream at them at the slightest mistake they make.
2. Beat them indiscriminately with their hands and legs or with objects other than a properly used cane.

3. Deny them food because they did something bad or failed to do domestic work.
4. Send them out to sell things on dangerous alleys and streets for long hours and without protection.
5. Force them to become the breadwinners of the family.
6. Compel them to beg on the streets to meet the needs of the adults.
7. Deny them educational opportunities so they end up as illiterates or semi-illiterates because they left school prematurely.
8. Compel them to have sexual intercourse with them or be involved in pornography.
9. Introduce them to drug addiction or make them drug couriers.
10. Had little or no bonding with their children and therefore failed to instruct and give them direction.
11. Put pepper or some harmful objects in their eyes or private parts as a form of punishment.

Many husbands live with women who are strangers to them because they failed to find out the childhood experiences of these women. Several women are still hurting because of the wicked experiences they had at the hand of their parents. Little children from polygamous homes suffer untold indignities. The conditions of the boys are often better than those of the girls. Like their mothers, girls are regarded as inferior. Some are not sent to school. Others are packaged early for marriage while they are still very young. They are forced to become mothers when they still need the love and care of their parents.

The stepfather-syndrome is another cause for concern. An uncountable number of children are sexually abused by their stepfathers. The girls live in fear and so cannot report their experiences to anyone. When they find the courage to tell their stories, even their mothers do not believe them. So they are caught in the crossfire of yielding to the advances of their stepfathers and preserving the marriage of their mothers.

The experiences of most women are so shameful and degrading that it will take a truly loving and caring husband to get them to open up. Because telling their stories gets them into more rejection, they bottle it up. They act as though nothing happened. But deep down they are dying of an emotional cancer which needs radical surgery and spiritual chemotherapy to be cured.

COUNSELLING AND PRAYER FOCUS

- As a leader or a potential leader, go beyond the surface to find out why your wife is behaving the way she is.
- Reassure her of your love and try to win back her confidence.
- Help her to tell you about her background, if she has not already done so. You must be ready to accept her no matter what she has gone through. No woman will tell you anything about her past unless she is completely sure you won't use it against her. A Christian lady told her fiancé that she once had an abortion when she was still an unbeliever. He broke their engagement and left the lady heartbroken and confused.
- Pray that God will heal your wife of every wound in her heart.
- Stand in the place of the men who have hurt her and bring identificational repentance on their behalf. God will hear you as a man.
- Bless your wife and deliver her from every generational curse that seeks to destroy her confidence.
- Use the Word of God to build up your wife's confidence. There is power in the word to forgive, heal and restore.
- Teach your wife to forgive and release everyone that has hurt her. Ask her to write down all of the names of the people who subjected her to indignities. Let her forgive and release them from her heart. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

GENDER-BASED INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY

Many societies have institutionalized cruelty against women in the name of culture and tradition. In 2003, UN Habitat published a report titled Rights and Reality in which it noted that "the commercialization of bride price makes men to think that women are their property to be used and discarded any time they chose" (Daily Nation , November 30, 2004, pp.12).

Women in many African societies have no property rights. Elly Wamari, in an article published in the Kenyan Daily Nation of November 30, 2004 titled "Who Said Women Can't Inherit land?" reports of studies which indicate discriminatory policies in the matter of land ownership. While women constitute 75% of the agricultural workforce in Kenya, their rights to own land is grossly limited. Wamari writes that in an agricultural research conducted in 1997 as part of the Welfare Monitoring Survey, the following was discovered:

- Men in Kenya held 65% of household title deeds as owners.
- Women held only 6% of title deeds.

- The remaining 29% was jointly held by husband and wife.
- In the Nyanza Province, men held 71% of the title deeds.
- In the Western Province, men held 69.9% of the title deeds.
- Only in the Central Province did women hold as much as 10.6%. Though this was higher than what they held in other Provinces, this figure was still relatively low, compared to the amount of title deeds held by men.
- In the Rift Valley Province, women held only 6.1% of the deeds, while in the rest of the Provinces the figures were less than 5%. (Daily Nation , November 30, p12).

Without economic empowerment women feel inferior to men. The situation is compounded when a woman is not employed and has to depend on her husband for financial support. When she makes a request and it is rejected, this reduces her self-worth and significance.

The treatment of widows creates its own special problems. Widows are dispossessed of their property by their in-laws when their husbands die. Musa W. Dube writes that "In some Southern African cultures, when a husband dies a brother inherits the widow and must sleep with her on the night of the burial. In some East African cultures, a widower must find a woman he does not know and sleep with her to dispel death from his body and his family" (Musa W. Dube Culture Gender and HIV/AIDS : Understanding and Acting on the Issues, p.13 in Musa W. Dube [ed], HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum, WCC Publication, Geneva. 2003).

These evil practices have exposed many women to HIV/AIDS. The Standard of October 25, 2004 a (Kenyan daily newspaper) reported that 300 widows in Rangwe confessed to having the AIDS virus. Of this number, 250 had been inherited by their husband's relations who denied them access to land and property which legitimately belonged to them by marriage.

SEXUAL ABUSE IN ADULTHOOD

A woman who is sexually violated against her consent will always suffer from multiple traumatic experiences. It does not matter who violated her. It could be her husband. It could be someone else. The commercialization of bride price, as we noted earlier, makes men in Africa feel that a wife is their personal property to be used and abused anyhow. This explains why some husbands could get drunk and come home to insist on having sex with their wives. They force them into sexual acts under gruesome conditions. One man tied his reluctant wife to the bed while she was still sleeping because he knew that she would refuse to have sex with him while he was drunk and under the influence of drugs. She woke up to see herself tied to the bed, helpless, as her husband violated her. Clay Muganda, in an article titled Rape is

Rape, No Matter Who Does It , says that "marital rape is destructive because it betrays the fundamental basis of the marital relationship. It questions every understanding a woman has not only of her partner and marriage, but also of herself. She ends up feeling betrayed, humiliated and, above all, very confused" (Daily Nation , November 26, 2004, p.12).

Given the fact that many men are unfaithful to their wives, the fear of contacting the AIDS virus is rife. This fear is compounded by the fact that few women can get their husbands to use a condom or to do a HIV test. A husband feels insulted and could become violent when he is told by his wife to wear a condom. Some women have received the beating of their life for making such a "ridiculous" suggestion.

In South Africa, a woman is raped every 60 seconds. There is an epidemic of rape, not just in this country but on the continent as a whole. The wife of Jacob Zuma, the Deputy Prime Minister of South Africa, was raped. When Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, the popular Kenyan writer and novelist, came back to Kenya after 23 years of self-exile, he was attacked in his hotel room and his wife abused. The case is still in court. Daily, the newspapers in Kenya are full of rape cases. No day goes without a lady or a little girl being raped. On November 25, at midnight, a 63-year-old catholic priest, Fr John Hannon was hacked to death at his St. Barnabas Catholic Church residence in Matasia district area of Nairobi. A 12-year-old girl was gang raped in the Church premises after the priest was killed. On November 26, the Daily Nation, the same paper that reported the killing of the Catholic priest and the raping of the 12-year-old girl that lived with him recounted that "Eleven disabled girls and women have been raped in Nanyuki Town in the last two months." The rapists, according to the report, "were targeting the disabled, especially the mentally retarded, who could not identify them" (p.7).

If all these women are not properly treated both medically, emotionally and spiritually, they will live the rest of their lives with scars in their minds. True, it is not every married woman who suffers from inferiority complex that has been raped. Nevertheless, any of these factors outlined and discussed above would make any woman develop a feeling of low self-esteem. A husband who notices that his wife has an acute low self-image and is unable to rise up above a certain level of confidence should lovingly and carefully investigate her background to discover the roots of her problem.

AVOID ANYTHING THAT WILL

REINFORCE YOUR WIFE'S FEARS

Inferiority complex generates irrational fear in people. Avoid anything that will aggravate and reinforce your wife's fears. She is already probably afraid that you will die and leave her alone.

1. So don't drive your car like a maniac and please put on your seat belt.
2. Call her whenever you will be late in coming back home.
3. As much as possible, avoid sleeping out of your home, unless this is absolutely unavoidable.
4. Don't threaten your wife. Don't do or say anything that will make her feel that you will one day abandon her the way her parents did when she was young.
5. Be reasonable whenever you are dealing with her or else you will aggravate her fears of the unknown.
6. Don't speak to her in a threatening manner. Be soft-spoken and nice, especially when you want to correct her.
7. Ensure that you constantly reassure her of your love and commitment to her and your children.
8. Don't give her the impression that it is what she does for you or gives to you that determines her place in your heart. Some wives who have not borne male children for their husbands are made to look useless. These women may have three or four girls, but it's as if they have not yet had a child. This is unfortunate. Even if your wife can't give you a male child for whatever reasons, don't be cruel to her. You can adopt a male child. I don't see why you can't. There are many children waiting for a home that will receive them. God will bless you if you decide to adopt.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR YOUR WIFE

Fear and anxiety are responses to unmet needs. You may have done all within your power to meet your wife's needs and to help her snap out of her low self-esteem without success. Don't give up. Continue to pursue all the counselling tips outlined above. Nevertheless, take your wife to a professional psychologist or therapist. He will know what to do. Also take your wife to a recognized and genuine minister who understands how to conduct deliverance. (There are many fake deliverance ministers everywhere. Avoid those who do things that are contrary to Scripture. Don't go near anyone who uses candles, incense, balms, etc. Anyone who tells you to bring some money before he conducts deliverance on your wife is of course fake. Run away from him.)

BE A SOURCE OF MOTIVATION AND

ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOUR WIFE

Remember that marriage is an instrument of redemption. Help your wife to recover the virtues she lost at childhood. If she did not complete her education, arrange for her to go back to school. If she had a limited education, push her to study at a higher level.

Many husbands who married semi-illiterates have sent them to school. Some of these women are today graduates.

Draw out the best in your wife with tender toughness. Pump in holy confidence in her. Teach her yourself whenever you can. Pray without ceasing for her. Be her intercessor. Practice systematic desensitization with her. Gradually expose her to the things she fears most. Help her to deal with her irrational fears. Send her to represent you at some public functions. Coach her on what to say and how to say it. Take her out to dinner whenever she puts in her best. Your commitment to your wife will motivate her to do the things she never thought she could do.

Chapter Twelve

WHEN SHE IS HIV-POSITIVE

The challenges facing women are increasing on a daily basis. These challenges are multi-dimensional: lack of economic empowerment, gender discrimination limited access to health-care delivery, and the underprivileged status of women globally. Some men still see women as "untrustworthy, incapable of handling property" and people who "needed male protection" (Daily Nation , November 30, 2004, p.12).

The challenges women face are compounded today by the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is ravaging individuals, families, nations and continents, particularly Africa. The HIV virus was first identified in the United States of America in 1981. Since that time, the disease called AIDS, which is a byproduct of the virus, has attracted global attention, because of its devastating effects on every segment of society. No institution of society has been left out of the rampage of HIV/AIDS. Families have been adversely affected; companies have lost staff to death and physical incapacitation; farms have been abandoned; the civil service is still being depleted in many countries and the church has not been spared by the scourge.

But perhaps the most devastating toll of the HIV scourge has been borne by families. It is in the family more than anywhere else that HIV/AIDS bares its ugly fangs. It has left a trail of widows and widowers, AIDS orphans and dependants who have nowhere to turn to whenever the ghostly clutches of this disease grab a beloved family member. AIDS is not just an individual's problem; it is a family tragedy, a disease that is fast becoming the fastest killer of human beings globally.

Someone rightly said that HIV/AIDS does not just infect the body, but it also affects relationships. It has led to stigmatization, abandonment of spouses, the exposure of children to grave dangers and countless cases of broken covenants. How should a husband respond to a wife who is HIV-positive? Should he continue to meet his obligations towards her? What should inform his modus operandi for relating to her? What if she is pregnant for him and

the baby in her womb is also HIV-positive? What should be his relationship with mother and child? Cogent answers to these vital questions are urgently needed if husbands must "beat" their HIV-positive wives.

HIV/AIDS: A GENDER BASED SICKNESS

No man can afford to hide his head in the sand like an ostrich given the fact that largely because of the behaviour of men, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is fast becoming a gender-based disease. Let the statistics speak for itself.

- In 2002 there were 36.6 million people living with HIV.
- By 2003 the number of people living with HIV globally increased. Dr. Peter Piot, the Executive Director of UNAIDS in his message at the World AIDS DAY in 2004 noted, "Today the face of AIDS is increasingly young and female". According to him, "This has profound implications – we will not be able to stop this epidemic unless we put women at the heart of the response to AIDS" (Daily Nation , December 1, 2004, p.39).
- According to a UNAIDS report, women and girls now make up 60% of those with HIV/AIDS infections in Africa.
- Of those infected within the 14-24 years age bracket women constitute 76%. An average of 36 young women in the age group live with HIV/AIDS compared to 10 young men.
- In Kenya, women account for 750,000 of the 1.2 million of those living with HIV. This means that the number of women infected with the disease is two times the number of men. And as Prof. Miriam Were has noted, " The situation turns out for the worst when we examine the prevalence rate in the 15 to 24 years age The number of infected young women is four times that of young men" (Daily Nation , December, 2004, p.39).

GENDER INEQUALITY AND HIV

PREVALENCE

The greater prevalence of HIV among women is a product of gender inequalities. Many women live in poverty. They are forced into prostitution, coerced to have sex with men who are HIV-positive. Because few women are educated, the problem is compounded by illiteracy, lack of awareness of rights and inability to negotiate condom use in their sexual relationship with HIV-positive men.

Notice that men were the greater carriers of the HIV virus at the early stages of the infection. Gradually, the number of women with HIV grew until today there are more women with the disease than men. Most women contracted the virus through sexual intercourse with men for whom multiple sexual partners is an

accepted norm. In many cases husbands were responsible for transferring the virus to their wives because of their sexual involvement with multiple partners.

The increase in sexual violence against women in marriage and outside marriage has also aggravated the problem. The sexual violation of women occurs on a daily basis. In Kenya, it is believed that 30,000 girls would have been raped by their 13th birthday (Zeddy Sambu, Daily Nation , November 29th 2004, p.12). On the average the violation of children accounts for 9.6% of reported cases of rape. About 23.1% represents the percentage of adolescence in the cases of rape reported. While those raped in their adulthood represent 4.1% of reported cases.

A study funded by Ford Foundation and two other groups reported that as many as 60.9 adult women had reported one form of sexual abuse or another. Ann Njogu argues that there is a close relationship between violence and AIDS. She cites a study in South Africa published in The Lancet which "shows that of 1,366 women attending health services in Soweto, those beaten by their husbands or boyfriends were 48% more likely to become infected with HIV than women in a non-violent relationship" (Daily Nation, November 29 2004, p.12).

Given the fact that most girls are sexually abused at a very tender age by older men, the danger of their contacting the HIV virus is very high. Thus a young girl, for no fault of hers, could be carrying the deadly virus because of the crime of rape for which the perpetrators are rarely punished. A married woman who is faithful to her husband could also be a carrier of the HIV virus because her husband is not faithful.

In Kenya, a certain married man had an affair with his housemaid, not knowing that she was HIV-positive. His adolescent son was also sexually involved with the same maid. It was discovered at some point that the entire family, except a daughter, were all HIV-positive—the man, his wife, his son and the housemaid. Here was a woman who was sexually faithful yet she was infected with HIV. It is against this background that Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS argued that "Prevention methods such as 'ABC' approach—Abstinence, Being faithful, Condom use counseled are good but not enough to protect women where gender inequality is pervasive." He counselled that, "We must ensure that women choose marriage to decide when and with whom they have sex, and to successfully negotiate condom use" (Daily Nation , 1st December 2004, p.39).

HOW YOUR WIFE MAY HAVE BEEN

INFECTED

That your wife is HIV-positive may not necessarily be because she has been unfaithful. Understanding the complicated issues involving women and the HIV pandemic will help you not to be

judgmental over her HIV status. A woman could become infected when she is compelled to go through the unhealthy cultural practice of female genital mutilation. The use of unsterilized blades for multiple women in the process of female circumcision is a major avenue through which the HIV virus is spread in many African societies. The seriousness of this route of infection is indicated by the fact that as many as 200 million women are circumcised annually.

Again the transfusion of contaminated blood could be another means by which your wife may have been infected. Then there is the problem of sexual abuse which could have happened when she was very young and at which point the rapist may have infected her with the virus. There have been reports of a 60-year-old man defiling a 6-year-old girl. In South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana, some men came up with the theory that sex with a baby is a veritable means of curing HIV/AIDS. This led to an epidemic of rape against children as young as two or three years old. There was even a case in which a six-month-old girl was raped by a middle-aged man.

Another means by which your wife may have been infected is through husband-to-wife transfer. This is a major avenue through which many women, especially in Africa, became HIV-positive. The plight of HIV widows is not only compounded by the fact that they have lost their husbands to the deadly virus, it is also aggravated by the knowledge that these men transferred the disease to their wives before dying.

To be a widow is bad enough. But to be HIV-positive because you were married to a man who had the virus is to further complicate an already complicated situation.

DEALING WITH AN HIV-POSITIVE WIFE

There are many things a husband must do to "beat" a HIV-positive wife.

Find out your own HIV status. This is very important. Men, however, often feel insulted when they are asked to do so; but there is no need to feel insulted. It is in your interest and in the interest of your family. Knowledge of your HIV status will encourage you to begin treatment as quickly as possible. It will help you and your family to plan for the future.

There have been cases where some men still bluntly refused to do a test after they learnt that their wives are HIV-positive. They simply got rid of their wives and got married to other women. In many cases they died earlier than their first wives because they had HIV/AIDS and also transferred the virus to their new found love. The fact that many men are dying and leaving widows who are also HIV-positive suggests that they contacted the disease long before their wives. There is no point in being cocky and proud. Go and find out your HIV status. The fact that your wife is

positive does not necessarily mean that you too will be HIV-positive. Nevertheless, whether you are positive or not, you are better equipped to know the next line of action. Psalm 82:5 say, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course." A similar Scripture in Hosea 4:6 says "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Don't walk about in darkness. It is dangerous to do so. Don't reject knowledge that is readily available to you. There are free HIV testing centres in many nations. Take advantage of them. Knowledge of your HIV status will be of great advantage to your children.

There were about 12 million AIDS orphans in Africa by 2003. Kenya alone has about 1.8 million AIDS orphans with some constituencies having as many as 2,000 children whose parents have been lost to the disease. In 2001, Kenya had 1 million AIDS orphans.

The stories of these children are heart-rending. Take the case of Charles Ouma, reported by Kwamboka Oyaro in the Daily Nation , commemorating the World AIDS Day on December 1, 2004. "My father died of AIDS in 1994 and my mother followed three years later. After her death, I moved in with my uncle, but a while later he and his wife died of AIDS," recounted Charles. He moved to live with an aunty and later with his old grandmother. As if the trail of death would not leave him alone, his grandmother also died. Charles withdrew from school, was often hungry because no one wanted to help him. According to him, the first kindness he ever received after the death of his grandmother was from a neighbour who agreed to employ him as a houseboy, at least to enable him to have food to eat. Oyaro quotes Charles who now lives and attends school at the Naisulis AIDS Orphan Project as saying, "Death followed me everywhere. It was said that I was a bad omen. I was called a death child and I almost believed it myself" (Daily Nation , December 1, 2004, p4).

Find out your HIV status for the sake of your wife and children. Don't reject knowledge so that God may not reject your children. Denial, fear and anxiety over the result of the test are natural. Note, however, that your security is in God. He knows how you feel. He is compassionate, so compassionate that He will still embrace and love you even if you are HIV-positive.

AVOID BLAME-HUNTING AND STIGMATIZATION

Human beings are always searching for who to blame whenever there is a problem. The art of passing the buck is a favourite game taught us by our first parents, Adam and Eve. Someone once said that certain people search for blame as if it is a buried treasure. A husband who discovers that he is HIV-positive could be tempted to blame his wife, especially if her own HIV status was discovered before his. But there is no point in being

involved in the blame game. It is not impossible that you first got the virus and transferred it to her. Prior discovery of her HIV status before yours is not an indication of who infected who. Stop arguing about all that and get on with finding out what you can do to help yourself and your wife. Pointing out who is to blame will not solve the problem; it will only aggravate the hatred and bitterness. And this is utterly unnecessary.

When you get tested and you discover that you are HIV-negative, how you respond to your HIV-positive wife is vital to the stability of her health. HIV-positive people can live for a very long time depending on the care they receive and how they fight opportunistic infections. Most men who discover that their wives are HIV-positive tend to abandon them. This is very unfortunate because the reverse is usually the case when the men are HIV-positive. Kofi Annan, a one-time UN Secretary General, in his message during the 2004 World AIDS Day, praised women, noting that "The courage that women are showing in this fight is matched only by the toll the disease is taking on them." Annan further noted, "Girls already make up the majority of children not in school. When AIDS strikes the family, those girls who are attending school are too often taken out to help run the household and care for sick relatives." To confirm Annan's point Phillis Atieno, a Kenyan girl who is an AIDS orphan, says, "My father died of AIDS and relatives deserted us. My mother was very sick and I skipped school many times to take care of her. I too wanted to die" (Daily Nation , December 1, 2004, p.4).

The vow you took on the day of your wedding was "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health." Now is the time to fulfill your vow. God is watching to see what you will do. There is a blessing for obedience and there is also a punishment or curse for the violation of the vow you willingly made. Your wife is already having a hard time with the HIV virus. Even if she has successfully overcome the fear and anxiety associated with discovering that one is HIV-positive, she will probably be contending with the impairment of her health by opportunistic infections. She is most likely dealing with the emotional trauma of isolation and loneliness. She is probably confronting the triple problems of anger, guilt and remorse. She needs you to connect and empathize with her. She needs someone who will teach her how to forgive herself and whoever may have infected her with the virus. She needs help to be reconciled with herself and with God.

BECOME AN HIV/AIDS COUNSELLOR TO

YOUR WIFE

Ephesians 5:25-28 says, " Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be

holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

There is no better time to demonstrate agape love to your wife than when you minister the compassion of Christ during this most critical moment of her life. This was what Jesus did for us. We were sick in sin and iniquity. We had defiled the flesh and rejected the pattern of righteousness. Nevertheless, Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

It's time to lay down your time, energy, resources and life for your wife.

- Focus your counselling on empathizing and pointing her to the love and compassion of God.
- Deepen and increase your level of communication with her. Learn to hold her hands, touch her body and snuggle with her as she is lying on the bed.
- Read Bible stories to her. Concentrate on those stories that point to the love and compassion of God. Show her also those ones that emphasize the covenant of divine health and healing. Encourage her to believe God for divine healing.
- Remind her of the wonderful times you both shared during courtship and at the honeymoon.
- Demonstrate the ministry of reconciliation to your wife. Get her to be reconciled to herself, to you and to God. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
- Teach your wife the need to avoid self-rejection and the feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness. This is usually a feeling that comes to people who have developed full-blown AIDS. They tend to be clinically depressed and even suicidal.
- Meet your wife's need for dignity when full-blown AIDS manifests in her. Tell her that you still see her as a woman of self-worth, substance and significance. Encourage her to know that it's not the diseased circumstances of her body that determines who she is, but the hope of her calling in Christ Jesus. Point her to Ephesians 1:18-19: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of

his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

- Stick around more than before when she reaches the terminal phase of her sickness. This is the point when she needs you most. Her body is weaker than ever. It is depreciating more and more and a new dimension of fear and uncertainty will attempt to overwhelm her. Your wife needs peace and the ultimate acceptance of the reality of death and dying. Gently teach and help her to let go. Life is a gift from God and one day the Giver will take back his gift from all of us. It does not matter the circumstances of our final demise. It could be by sickness or any other means, although sickness is not God's will for his children.

Nevertheless, the reality is that we all one day will go back to our Maker and our God. Teach your wife to let go with a heart full of the peace of God that passes all understanding. Only Jesus can give such peace. That's why He is called the Prince of Peace. Point your wife to Him. Ask her to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of her faith. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

The terminal phase of your wife's sickness is critical. What you do with her at this stage and how she responds to your ministry could determine where she spends eternity. This is why you need to be around to comfort, counsel and pray with her.

BE AN HIV/AIDS CARE-GIVER TO YOUR WIFE

Counselling is only one aspect of your responsibility; the other is care-giving. We have few HIV/AIDS counsellors and there are even fewer care-givers. The other problem is that most counsellors and care-givers are women. Lucas Gichamba, a 25-year-old male volunteer care-giver says, "Men just can't deal with the sight of a sick woman; they do not want to touch her or clean her." Lucas knows exactly what he is talking about. He is not just a volunteer care-giver, but is also living with the HIV virus. Richard Delate, the Advocacy and Media Advisor of UNAIDS in Southern Africa notes that it was a woman that nursed Lucas back to health when he was attacked by TB, an opportunistic infection prevalent in HIV-positive patients. Delate also notes that for Lucas, "caring for people who are sick with an HIV-AIDS related illness is not just a woman's job This is not a man's or woman's disease – it is everyone's disease" (Richard Delate, A Caring Man Amongst Women , Daily Nation , December 1, 2004, p.3).

You promised to care for your wife in sickness and health, till death. Now go ahead and fulfill your promises. Learn to help her up when she needs a helping hand. Clean her up when she is too weak to clean herself. Give her a bath, cook for her, wash her clothes. Take her to the hospital to see the doctor. Run errands for her. Be there when she needs a friend to talk to or wipe her

tears. Be ready to do all these and more for as long as it will take.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (1 st Corinthians 13:4-8a).

PRAYER FOCUS

- Ask God to give you the courage and grace to be a HIV/AIDS counsellor and care-giver to your wife.
- Tell God to give you the enablement to empathize with her plight so she can be filled with security, dignity, peace and acceptance, not withstanding her conditions.
- Ask God to help you to minister the word of reconciliation to your wife, so she can be reconciled to herself, to those around her and to God.
- Pray for God's intervention and healing for your wife. Malachi 4:2 says, " But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" .
- Pray that whatever happens, your wife's name should never be removed from the Lamb's book in Heaven. That God will have mercy on her and secure her place in eternity.
- Ask God for courage to bear the loss if eventually bereavement occurs. Pray for yourself and the children. Ask God to help you eventually overcome sadness, anger and depression. Seek for the comfort of the Holy Spirit which brings acceptance and grace to continue living.
- Thank God for everything. Pray that God will use your wife's funeral if eventually she dies to draw people to God. Pray that people will through it know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

Chapter Thirteen

WHEN SHE IS SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION

Men are sometimes bemused about the attitude, temperament and general characteristics of women. One man said, "I just can't understand women. Sometimes they say yes to you while deep down they mean no. At other times they feign to be sick when that is not exactly the reality of their condition. Women pretend a lot, and I am fed up with them." Complaining about a similar difficulty, Sigmund Freud, the famous Psychologist said that "after thirty years of studying them, I still don't know what

exactly it is that women want." Not knowing what a woman wants could be dangerous when she is in trouble. She could be silently screaming for help without receiving your attention. Her situation is compounded when you believe that women pretend a lot.

Many men have little or no experience with women and this tends to prejudice their judgment of them. It also limits their ability to know when a woman needs urgent help. Derek Prince, in *Husbands and Fathers*, confesses to this limitation. "During all the years of my education, I never had a female teacher. At Cambridge I had a few girlfriends, but the inner workings of the female personality remained a mystery to me – a mystery I was not particularly interested in trying to solve When Lydia and I were married, she brought with her eight girls without parents to whom she had become an adoptive mother, and for whom, from that time onward, I accepted the responsibility of fatherhood. Of these girls, six were Jewish, one was Arab and one was English. They ranged in age from eighteen to three. From my background as a boy without brothers or sisters, I suddenly found myself the only male responsible for ten females—Lydia, her eight girls and one Arab maid, Jameela" (p.9-11). Prince notes that there were many adjustments he had to make. Notwithstanding however, there were times he felt that he had taken more responsibilities than he could chew and swallow. This was probably because he still neither understood the mystery and inner workings of the female personality nor did he completely overcome the lack of interest in trying to decode it.

Derek Prince's situation was unique. Nevertheless, most men find it extremely difficult to make the kind of adjustments Prince had to make and to take responsibility for the physical and emotional welfare of the women around them. In the last chapter we noted what Lucas Gichamba, a male HIV-positive care-giver said: "Men just can't deal with the sight of a sick woman, they do not want to touch her or clean her up." The situation is compounded when these women are suffering from depression, a disease that is not easily obvious at the early stages of its development. A man who thinks that women pretend a lot might not know the gravity of his wife's plight if she is suffering from depression. This spells danger for the woman and for her family. A man should understand the inner workings of his wife and know how to help her when she is suffering from depression.

THE NATURE OF DEPRESSION

Depression is a deadly disease currently plaguing many people. It is a melancholic state of mind which reduces one's vitality, creativity and zeal for life. It creates deep sadness, loss of interest, low self-esteem and a feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness.

One could be depressed without knowing it. Deep down you know that something is missing in your life, even though you may not

be able to articulate what it is. Depression can strike anybody, teenagers, adolescent, the middle-aged and the aged.

There are different types of depression. These include, among others:

1. Dysthymia –A condition characterized by insomnia, loss of energy, abnormal appetite and lack of self-worth.
2. Clinical Depression –A condition which manifests as persistent sadness, tiredness, and anxiety due to chemical imbalance in the brain.
3. Bipolar or Manic Depression –A condition which depicts a very extreme form of depression in which a patient could vacillate from euphoria to deep melancholic despair (Stella Okoronkwo, Healing From Depression, Uzima, 2003 pp. 5-6).

It is believed that women are more likely to suffer from depression than men. Stella Okoronkwo, in her book Healing From Depression, says that women are more than twice as likely as men to experience clinical depression. This probably explains why men are sometimes slow to understand and deal with depression in their wives.

LOOK OUT FOR SYMPTOMS OF

DEPRESSION IN YOUR WIFE

Since an individual can be depressed without immediately knowing it, a husband must be sensitive and alert to detect or recognize signs of depression in his wife. This will not happen if you are an aloof, distant and uncaring husband. You should be very observant about the state of those around you, especially your wife. Look out for the following warning signals.

1. Loss of the Will to Live : This is a state of despondency in which one gives up hope. It creates a false impression in the depressed that there is no purpose to life and therefore no point in continuing to live.
2. Suicidal Tendencies : This is a natural result of loss of the will to live. The depressed is constantly harassed with strange voices which encourage her to commit suicide. These voices could be so overwhelming that they are verbalized as the thoughts and desires of the depressed. You could hear her say: "There is nothing in this life. I just want to die." Sometimes a second opposing thought, also verbalized, could indicate the conflict the depressed is having. "I know the children need me, but it doesn't matter now. I just want to go and rest," she could say.
3. Hearing Strange and Negative Voices : This happens as the mind and emotional stability of the depressed is impaired. Voices

and counter voices could be heard giving contradictory instructions. Where these instructions are contrary to anything written in the Bible, they are the product of satanic voices. Where they conform to the Word, they are most likely the voice of the Holy Spirit giving direction. One woman who used to be depressed told me how one day a voice forcefully instructed her to crash the car on a tree while she was driving. The prompting of this voice was so strong, but almost immediately another gentle but equally strong voice asked her to pull the car out of the road, take five deep breaths, wait a while before continuing her journey. She obeyed the second voice and was okay after a while.

4. Slothfulness : This is a classic symptom of clinical depression. It makes you lie in bed utterly weakened in spirit, soul and body. The depressed does not want to lift a hand to do anything. Those ignorant of the trauma a woman in this condition is going through could term her lazy. An ignorant husband saw his wife in this condition for close to two weeks. He called her names, jeered and sneered at her for being lazy, lukewarm and useless.

5. Withdrawal Syndrome : This is a state of avoiding people, friends, loved ones or colleagues in the workplace. It is borne out of not wanting any one to know what she is passing through. Where the depressed person used to be very active, exercising leadership roles, the withdrawal syndrome is compounded by fear of being classified as weak and backslidden. The depressed therefore would avoid people, refuse visits, abandon phone calls and generally cut off from society. The longer the withdrawal lasts the deeper the problem grows.

6. Loss of Interest in People and Job : This happens even with a loved one. Depression dries up the fountain of loving relationships. It kills enthusiasm for work because the depressed sees no purpose in life. Responsibilities are shirked, jobs abandoned, the home suffers and many husbands who don't understand what is happening to their wives complain bitterly.

7. Victimization Syndrome : This is a belief in the depressed that she is a victim. It creates self-pity and compounds an individual's self-esteem, self-worth and significance. Sometimes perceived enemies are arrested in her mind, tried and condemned upon the false premises of a warped sense of justice. They are locked up or imprisoned in her heart. This becomes a throne of iniquity for storing bitterness and barrenness.

8. Persistent and Prolonged Illnesses : This manifests as the depressed complains of one ailment or another. Today it is one problem, tomorrow it is another. Sometimes one ailment is cured just as another crops up.

9. Self-abuse : This is the deliberate or unconscious infliction of pain on one's self. Stella Okoronkwo says that it

could manifest in over indulgence or starvation. The depressed either refuses to eat at all or eats too much (p. 21).

HOW TO HELP YOUR WIFE DEAL WITH DEPRESSION

There are many interrelated things a husband can do to help his wife overcome and come out of depression.

1. Taking responsibility for causing or aggravating her problem.
2. Taking active interest in her diet.
3. Activating and re-invigorating her sexual life.
4. Seeking professional help for your wife.
5. Helping your wife to laugh again.
6. Giving your wife a second honeymoon.
7. Becoming your wife's Intercessor.

Let us discuss some of the practical ways you can achieve these objectives.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR AGGRAVATING YOUR WIFE'S DEPRESSION

There are many factors that could cause depression in a woman. These include lack of fulfillment in a relationship, occurrence of persistent and peculiar reproaches, contrary expectations, depreciating tendencies, threat of separation or divorce, loss of a loved one, burn-out arising from overwork, lack of appreciation by loved ones and bitterness arising from false accusation.

It is possible that you may be responsible for activating or aggravating any of these problems. To help your wife to come out of depression you must take responsibility for whatever you may have done to trip off your wife's problem. Many men find it difficult to own up to a fault. This poses a great hindrance both for them and for those they have offended. A woman feels depressed when her husband does not seem to care. Some men leave home, come back any time they like and are offended when their wives object to their actions. A woman may complain for a while but becomes emotionally detached from her husband when complaints are ignored. This sometimes leads the woman to imagine what her husband could be doing outside the home so late in the night. Not responding to your wife's emotional and physical needs for companionship could aggravate bitterness in her. When a man rejects his wife in this or any other way, the doors of depression can be opened in her life. Any feeling that a man is

not faithful could also compound the emotional instability of his wife. This could generate uncontrollable anger and wrath which could trigger off chemical imbalances within her.

One woman found that her husband was having an affair with her best friend. She saw the naked pictures of her husband in her friend's cell phone which she borrowed to make an emergency call. Her friend justified herself when she confronted her. Her husband added insult to the injury when she told him her discovery. He simply told her to go to hell if she wanted to. Betrayed by her best friend and insulted by her husband, this woman became bitter, hypersensitive, irritable and later suicidal.

Have you been completely faithful to your wife? Have you in any way done anything that could have triggered her problem? Have you given her the love, emotional and material support a husband should give his wife? Have you been cruel and uncaring? Have you been unduly critical of her? Have you given her cause to suspect your loyalty and dependability? Are you always brushing aside her complaints? Have you been emotionally isolated and physically detached from your wife?

If you answered any of these questions in the affirmative, then you need to repent. Confess your sins and ask God to forgive you for being cruel to your wife. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." Go immediately to your wife and make restitution. This was the means by which Zacchaeus opened the door of mercy and grace for himself. Restitution will not only do the same for you it will open the windows of fresh ventilation for your wife and help her to begin the process of healing. Luke 19:8-10 says,

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him. This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost .

TAKE ACTIVE INTEREST IN HER DIET

The type of food a depressed person eats could enhance her healing or aggravate her situation. We noted earlier that depression could manifest in two different symptoms of self abuse –over-eating or starvation. This means that a depressed person would need monitoring. If your wife is abusing herself by starvation, you must encourage her to eat. Get her to eat a balanced diet. Emphasize natural as opposed to artificial food. Give her a lot of water to drink. Stella Okoronkwo quoting the Parent's Magazine published in Kenya notes that "poor nutrition causes cell degeneration. The cells need food in the form of oxygen and nutrients especially amino acids and protein, which are the body's main building materials" (Parent's Magazine , Keeping Age At Bay , 1988 in Stella Okoronkwo, p. 35).

Taking active interest in your wife's diet demands helping to prepare it for her if you can. Show your wife simple acts of love. This is actually the best time for you to enter the kitchen and cook for your wife.

When Jesus died on the cross, the Bride of Christ represented by his disciples at this time were confused, fearful and depressed. They abandoned him at the garden of Gethsamene and all denied him. Even when Jesus rose from the dead they were still bemused and dejected. Peter mobilized the others to go back to fishing, a profession they had relinquished for ministry while Jesus was alive. After His resurrection Jesus saw the depressed state of His Bride, their fear and state of confusion. He went to the bank of the river early in the morning and made breakfast for them after an unsuccessful outing of fishing all night.

You might say it is not right for a man to cook for his wife. Maybe it is not right in your culture. But if Jesus could prepare breakfast for His Bride who was depressed, who are you not to do it for your wife, especially when she too is depressed? Ephesians 5:25-29 says,

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

ACTIVATE AND RE-INVIGORATE HER

SOCIAL LIFE

A depressed person suffers from a desire to be isolated. She withdraws from all forms of socializing and prefers to be emotionally detached from friends and family. It will take a creative husband to gradually nurse her back into social circulation. Don't try to force her or push her into it. Gently and lovingly encourage her to be more outgoing. Plan dates with her and for her. Take your wife to the cinema to watch a comedy. Take her to see a musical concert or an opera. Choose the kind of outings that will loosen her up and make her realize that there is still something in life to be enjoyed.

She may resist all your efforts initially and give you a million excuses why she does not want to go out with you. Gently prod her. Avoid cajoling or coercing her into doing anything. Avoid being domineering. Don't threaten to abandon her to her plight if she does not immediately respond to every attempt to help her. Be very soft in the way you speak to her. Speak good words to her; say wonderful things to her hearing. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

Find out what she particularly enjoyed doing socially before her sickness. Rekindle that passion in her. It would be easier to step her out in the area of her passion than to introduce her to something completely alien to her. If she enjoyed dancing before, then gently push her in that direction. If she loved fashion, then take her to a fashion show. Take her for shopping, buy her new clothes. Encourage her to wear it out the next time you are able to convince her to another date with you. If she loves good food, take her to a classy restaurant for a buffet, provided she is not the type of depressed person who overeats as a form of self-abuse. Do whatever you can to break the yoke of depression in your wife.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR HER

Whatever you do to help your wife should not exclude getting her to see a professional counsellor or a therapist. Depression is a medical condition and it is important you take your wife to a skilled professional. He will know what type of antidepressants to prescribe for her. He should be able to determine whether your wife needs treatment with the aid of Electro-convulsive therapy. This type of therapy is used to treat very acute cases of depression.

Pastoral counselling may also be needed. A good counsellor with sound biblical foundations will carefully take your wife through interpreting her problems, establishing the counselling goals to be achieved and adopting treatment method. Many people despise counselling because they don't understand its value. Counselling even before a problem arises prevents the fall of man (Proverbs 11:14), creates the condition of safety in human relationships, helps those who have fallen to rise again, establishes the plans and purposes of God in man (Proverbs 15:23) and empathizes and comforts the counsellee in the areas the counsellor himself had needed comfort before (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Don't just take your wife to the counsellor and drop her there. Sit down with her. The counsellor may see her privately, but he or she may also desire to see you with her. Given the fact that marital relationships have a lot to do with the depression of people in the family you will be better equipped to avoid the conflicts that may have triggered off your wife's condition. Humble yourself and seek help from the counsellor. "For whoever exalts himself will be abased and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11). Counselling is needed for behaviour modification and this is indispensable for dealing with depression.

HELP YOUR WIFE TO LAUGH AGAIN

Laughter, they say, is the best medicine. So help your wife to laugh again. Become a comedian for her in the name of love. You used to make her laugh before, you can do it again. Get a humorous book and read it to her. Lie with her on the same bed,

hold her to yourself and read to her. Get a good humorous tape and listen to it together.

Play with your wife the way you did when both of you were courting. Do the things you did to make her laugh. Proverbs 17:22 says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." Revive your wife's spirit with godly jokes. Proverbs 18:14 says, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Laughter will quicken your wife's spirit and sustain her to overcome the consequences of depression.

GIVE YOUR WIFE A SECOND

HONEYMOON

I wrote a book some years ago titled *Your Honeymoon Can Last Forever*. A honeymoon is a special time of undisturbed romance. It is a time of romantic euphoria, a holiday of some sort for a bride and a bridegroom after their wedding.

Give your wife a second honeymoon. You may not be newly weds, but you can relive that special moment when you pledged your allegiance to each other and to God. Get out of your usual environment to somewhere special. It may be for a couple of days only; but that shouldn't bother you. Just give your wife a change of environment. Go to a natural environment with flowers and trees. Behold the beauty of creation in its excellent form. God will use your time out to refresh your relationship and revive the will to live in your wife.

Remember that she probably believes that you don't love her anymore. She probably feels that you don't care. Show her that you care, prove her wrong. Take her to a place where you can reaffirm your love and loyalty to her. Arrange for someone to take care of your children. Take your wife for a honeymoon restoration holiday.

BECOME YOUR WIFE'S INTERCESSOR

Every man is supposed to be his wife's intercessor just as every woman is supposed to be her husband's intercessor. When Rebecca was barren and probably depressed because of her inability to have children, we are told that Isaac "Entreated the Lord for the sake of his wife." He prayed for his wife and God opened her womb and gave her twins. There is power in the intercessory prayer of a husband for his wife. Jesus our Heavenly Bridegroom is still today interceding for the church, His Bride. He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Climb up to your watchtower and travail for your wife. Bind the spirit of depression that seeks to destroy her life. Stand upon the words of Jeremiah 30:16-17.

Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

- Ask the Lord to devour this spirit of depression that seeks to devour your wife.
- Tell the Lord to take your wife's spiritual adversaries into captivity.
- Tell Him to prey upon all the symptoms that seek to prey upon her spirit, soul and body.
- Release the hand of God to plunder the spirit of death and hell which seeks to plunder your wife through suicidal thoughts.
- Bind the spirit of suicide in your wife and cast it out of your family.
- Ask God to restore health to your wife and heal her physical, mental and emotional wounds.
- Make a proclamation based on the word that even the lawful captives shall be delivered.

Believe God to make a way even where there seems to be no way. Your wife's redemption has already been purchased by Christ. By the stripes of Jesus she was healed.

Remember to stay around your wife to comfort her when she is mourning. Take good care of her during and after delivery. Some women experience a post-partum depression which comes after childbirth. She may not be interested in sex at this time. Be understanding and patient with her until she is ready for intimate relationship with you. Every thing you do to enhance the health of your wife will enhance the welfare of your family. Be a good husband, seek the good of your family.

Chapter Fourteen

ORDINARY HUSBANDS CAN BEAT THEIR WIVES EXTRAORDINARILY

The general profile of men today is marred by the culture of violence against women. Male claims to superiority over women, the subjugation of wives to second-class citizens, denial of property rights to women, marital rape and incestuous violations of daughters by their fathers have combined to give men a negative image.

The situation is compounded by sex scandals linked to men even in respected institutions such as the United Nations. There have

been reports of sexual abuse of women by UN peacekeepers in Cambodia, Kosovo, East Timor and Congo. The case of Congo is actually pathetic. Male soldiers have been accused of abusing the very women they were sent to protect. ". . . The 150 allegations of rape, paedophilia, and solicitation in Congo may be the United Nations worst sex scandal in years . . . Women and children have reportedly been raped and there is said to be video and photographic evidence of crimes" (Daily Nation , November 25, 2004, p. 14).

These reports notwithstanding, men in several nations are beginning to recognize the need to deal with the negative image associated with them. Enlightened men are becoming more gender sensitive. They are taking up activist roles to campaign for equality of men and women. Rebecca Nandwa in a report published in the Daily Nation , titled "Men too have taken up fight against gender inequality" notes that "A lobby group, Men for Gender Equality (MGE) has been part of the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign" from November 25-December 10, 2004. She writes that their "mission is to send a message to men that gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS are destructive and expensive" (Daily Nation , December 5, 2004, p. 6).

There have also been individual men who acted in exemplary manners towards their wives. These ordinary men "beat" their spouses in extraordinary ways. They showed compassion and courage in challenging situations. They proved that husbands can creatively excel over their wives instead of adopting negative and destructive actions to deal with the challenges they pose. We shall conclude this book by looking at the heroic actions of these ordinary men with extraordinary grace.

COMMITTED WITHOUT LIMITS

Joseph and Mary were engaged to be married. They met when they were in school where they also fell in love . A few weeks to their wedding Mary did a routine HIV test and discovered that she was positive. She could have hidden her status from Joseph, if she chose to, but did not.

Mary told Joseph her HIV status because she was convinced the wedding should be called off. She was devastated by the result of the test. Nevertheless, she was determined to let Joseph go. Mary said she loved him too much to allow him to go through the pain and anguish of her condition.

Joseph and Mary met to discuss the crisis they faced. Joseph himself was devastated when Mary broke the bad news to him. He first comforted Mary and encouraged her not to take any rash decision. He then went on to consult his family and a doctor. Joseph's family vehemently objected to the marriage and his doctor also advised against it.

Joseph, nevertheless, decided to disregard the views of the doctor. He got married to Mary. It was not long he too became HIV-positive. These were the early days of the epidemic. Joseph did not have all the counsel he needed to avoid contacting the virus from his wife. By the time Mary became pregnant, knowledge of how to protect the baby in the womb from mother-to-baby transmission was well advanced. Mary took advantage of the advancement of knowledge in this area. Joseph and Mary had a baby and he was HIV-negative.

Joseph and Mary are HIV Counsellors and care-givers to other HIV-positive patients. They are doing a great work in the area of raising community awareness about HIV/AIDS. They are also involved in the dissemination of information on how to remain HIV free through the ABC method—Abstinence; Being faithful, Condom use.

With the introduction of anti-retroviral drugs Joseph and Mary are living relatively healthy lives. They are proving that there is life after HIV. They are also proving that love is indeed a great weapon against the stigmatization of HIV-positive people. Joseph demonstrated that a man can lay down his life for his wife as Christ laid down His life for the Church.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you (John 15:12-14).

FORGIVING TO THE END

When Job got married to Helen he promised himself that there was nothing she would do to him that he could not forgive her. Every commitment of course would be tested. And the time certainly came when Job's commitment was severely tested.

He traveled for a relatively long time of six months, during which he was only in touch with his wife by phone. Everything seemed okay while he was away. He missed his wife and he hoped that Helen also missed him. They were a happy couple, fully committed to each other and to God.

Job came back from his journey to meet a moody and unhappy wife. He did everything to make her cheerful, but to no avail. Helen stopped eating, was looking depressed and utterly dejected. She was gradually being eaten up until one day Helen called Job's attention to the fact that she was pregnant with another man's child, someone she had a chance meeting with while he was away. She had an affair with him, a one-time "fling" with a man she hardly knew. The sad thing about the whole affair was that she did not even know where the man lived or who he was. They had met at a conference, in a hotel out of town. Helen had made the silly mistake of taking up the man's invitation to share a cup of tea in his room. One thing led to another, and before she knew it,

they had sex. The conference ended and she came back home only to discover that she was pregnant. Every attempt to reach the man proved abortive.

Helen was weeping profusely while she was narrating her plight. Job sat there listening, but was also crying. His heart was heavy and he was hoping that what he was hearing was only a fairy tale. But no! It was real.

Helen finished her tale, knelt down and apologized to her husband. She then proceeded to tell Job that she was leaving, so he could live without the shame she had brought to him. Job was still crying. But he remembered the commitment he had made. He told Helen not to go anywhere. He told her that he was disappointed and angry, but that he was ready to forgive her. He even promised to adopt the child. Helen was too grief-stricken to accept his offer. She was bent on leaving. It took weeks to persuade her not to. But when she was adamant Job encouraged her not to go back to her parents, but to move into the duplex next to their home with the promise that she could move back to her rightful place any time she chose.

Job behaved like his Father God and every husband is called to behave in like manner. Psalm 103:8-14 says,

The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.

STEPS TO SALVATION

Acknowledge —“ . . . Be merciful unto me a sinner”—Luke 18:13.

Confess —“If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”—1 John 1:9.

Repent —“Except ye repent ye shall likewise perish—Luke 13:3. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.”—Acts 3:19.

Forsake —“Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon”—Isaiah 55:7.

Believe —“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned ”— Mark 16:16.

Receive —“He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name”—John 1:11-12.

Abide —“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me”—John 15:4.

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